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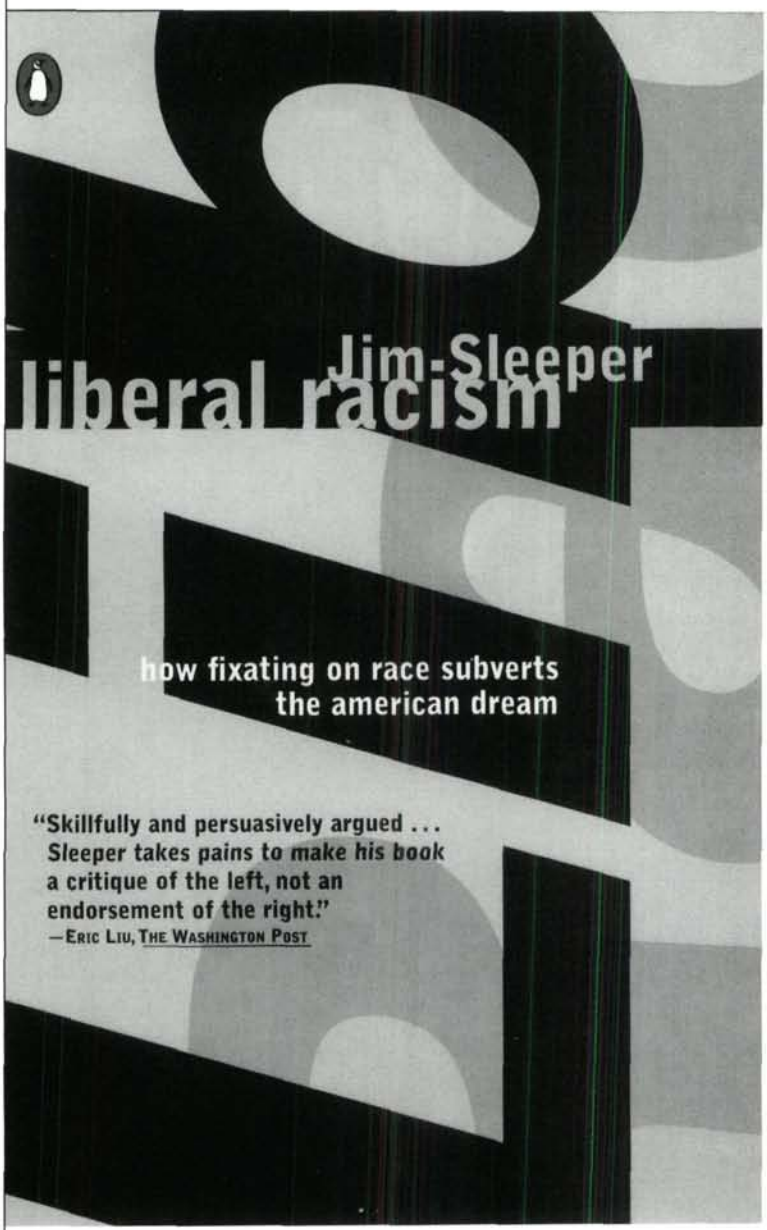
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"[Sleeper]challenges liberals, who once fought to help America rise above color, to get back to their abandoned program of a transracial civic faith. **Read *Liberal Racism* and then, if you dare, take a long look in the mirror.**" —C. Eric Lincoln

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—John Patrick Diggins

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NOVEMBER 2, 1998

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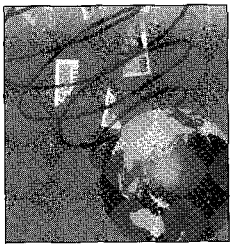

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Pop psychology

To the editors:
Leave it to TNR to come up with the most original, brilliant, and fascinating analysis of this country's current malaise. Jonathan Lear's "Freudian Slip" (September 28) exculpates no one but will please neither the righteous nor the self-righteous—left, right, or center.

ROBERT COHEN
Kingston, New York

To the editors:
As admirers of Professor Jonathan Lear's writings on Freud and psychoanalysis, we were distressed to see him apply an ill-conceived and misdirected form of psychoanalysis to the current Clinton crisis. Lear focuses not on the real problems—the self-inflicted legal and moral wounds of the Clinton administration—but on the intense public reaction provoked by the sorry White House spectacle. Lear ignores the complexity of the public's reaction, sensationalizing it and then invoking a "psychoanalytic" interpretation. This maneuver comes very close to implicating *everyone* in Clinton's sexual pathology. But the voters who elected him have every right to be enraged at Clinton's blend of fellatio and foreign policy without being labeled by Lear as "the sons" attacking the "primal father." Psychoanalysts, of all people, should not be the ones to facilitate the avoidance of harsh realities by way of stereotypical fantasies and pseudo-historical myths. Better for us to maintain a modest silence and permit the republic to right itself through its constitutional processes.

HERBERT M. WYMAN, M.D.
STEPHEN M. RITTENBERG, M.D.
Editors, Journal of Clinical Psychoanalysis
New York, New York

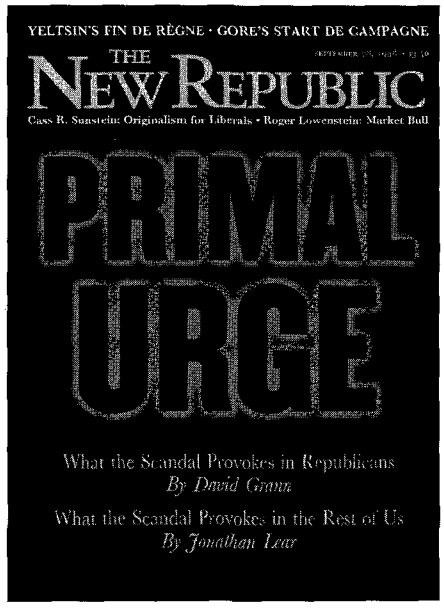
To the editors:
Jonathan Lear's essay on the Freudian primal-father myth certainly made for engrossing reading. While I agree that such myths are useful for understanding our social dynamics, why resort to myth when the animal world provides an immediate, effective, and empirically supported model for our current president's activities?

Consider the chimpanzee. It's well known that this particular primate shares about 98 percent of our DNA, and even a cursory examination of chimp society reveals activities still enjoyed in our allegedly enlightened society.

The alpha male (President Clinton—primate father?) of the chimpanzee society shares all of the characteristics of Freud's primal father: he impregnates whomever he will and he lords his sexuality over his fellow males, who in turn bow and scrape until one of them is assertive enough to cuff the alpha male, wrestle him until he's sufficiently humiliated (Mr. Starr? Mr. Gingrich?), and command his position.

So the worst that can be said of this imbroglio is that it's taken us a rung or two down the evolutionary ladder. Or were we already there?

ROBERT A. STRIBLEY
Greenville, South Carolina


YELTSIN'S FIN DE RÈGNE · GORE'S START DE CAMPAGNE
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Cass R. Sunstein: Originalism for Liberals • Roger Lowenstein: Market Bull
PRIMAL URGE
What the Scandal Provokes in Republicans
By David Gram
What the Scandal Provokes in the Rest of Us
By Jonathan Lear

Character matters

To the editors:
Michael Walzer thinks that we should concentrate on what politicians propose to do about public problems rather than focus on their sexual behavior ("News Unworthy," September 28). I dissent; both are important.

It is a national asset, especially in a media-saturated environment, to have leaders whose overall character can withstand scrutiny. While a president's influence on society should not be exaggerated, neither should it be dismissed as inconsequential. And how the public reacts to presidential immorality is more important than the immorality itself.

REO M. CHRISTENSON
Miamisburg, Ohio

Livable politics

To the editors:
Dana Milbank's White House Watch is a perfect example of why Washington just doesn't get it ("Just Whistle," September 28). While our nation's capital is consumed by the scandal du jour, citizens across the country are focusing on how to make their communities better places in which to live and work. People are more concerned about their schools, housing, transportation, parks, and open space than about the latest political intrigue in Washington. Vice President Gore's "livability" campaign taps into these daily concerns. Rather than an "unconventional issue" of interest only to policy wonks, the initiative is as American as apple pie. It is about how we will live in a rapidly changing world in ways that will help us recreate a sense of community. Luckily for those of us outside the Beltway, Vice President Gore has noticed and wants to spark a debate.

DOUG HENTON
San Mateo, California

Mixed review

To the editors:
Andrew Sullivan's powerful and eloquent call for President Clinton's resignation reminds us that there are still commentators on public events in this country with wisdom, honesty, and a deep concern for the state of the republic ("Lies That Matter," September 14 & 21). Sullivan's article rises above partisan analysis—with a searing honesty that stands in vivid contrast to the smarmy character of its subject.

STEFAN B. HERPEL
Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the editors:
Andrew Sullivan's article is a shocking, biased polemic full of distortions and naked hatred of President Clinton. The worst of this extraordinary attack is that Sullivan labels political decisions by the president that he, Sullivan, disagrees with as stemming from a character flaw or outright lie. Granted that, as a conservative, Sullivan has a right to disagree with Clinton's stance on late-term abortion, national health care, and welfare reform. But he has no right to ascribe the president's opinions to lying or to a character flaw.

MORTON WACHSPRESS
Woodmere, New York

To the editors:
As an example of the president's "moral nihilism," Andrew Sullivan notes that Clinton "claimed to be a New Democrat and yet embarked first and foremost on instituting semi-socialized medicine." I'm amazed that we are still being treated to the canard that health care reform was an issue that Clinton somehow smuggled into the White House. The truth, of

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course, is that it was one of the cornerstones of his 1992 campaign. Liberals have every right to be disgruntled with Clinton over his poor handling of the reform. But, when neoconservatives complain about Clinton's alleged betrayal of "New Democratic" principles, it is not because Clinton proved to be cynical on the issue of health care in 1993 but rather because he didn't betray his principles.

PERRY MOON
Nacogdoches, Texas

Good intentions

To the editors:
Laurence Grafstein's New York Diarist scorched through the cant, hypocrisy, and posturing of the Starr investigation, its commentators, and our pathetic leaders ("Morality Plays," September 14 & 21). This article alone is worth a subscription to TNR.

DONALD GREENBERG
Harare, Zimbabwe

To the editors:
Laurence Grafstein characterizes George Bush's "read my lips" promise not to raise taxes as dishonest, mendacious, and false—in short, as a lie. But a broken promise is not a lie unless it was intended to be broken as it was being made. Surely, while making the promise, candidate Bush was aware of the great political cost that breaking it as president would bring upon him and would not have intended to pay this cost. Thus the later breaking of the promise must have been reluctant and unintended, and the promise could not have been a lie.

KARL LOFQUIST
Bethesda, Maryland

Welfare check

To the editors:
You're right to cheer on Wisconsin's innovative, work-based program ("Welfare Check," September 28). But it could have been, and still could be, a lot better. Wisconsin Works places most participants who can't find private-sector employment into community-service jobs. But the legislation fails to model those jobs on private-sector ones. Participants do not earn wages, depriving them of the Earned Income Tax Credit, and thus lowering their income by thousands of dollars. And the communities they live in lose out on the tens of millions of dollars of EITC payments that, if wages were paid, would flow into local economies. Other problems with the program include its mismanaged child care component, its focus on single moms to the

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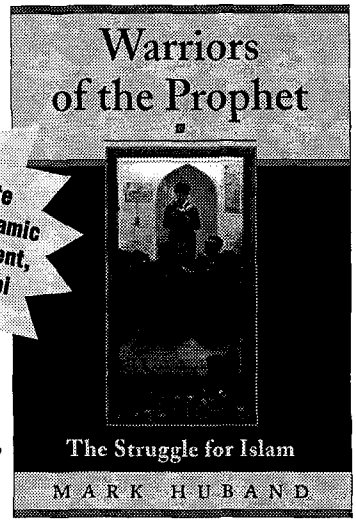
WARRIORS OF THE PROPHET

The Struggle for Islam
MARK HUBAND


Warriors
of the Prophet
The most up-to-date investigation of the Islamic fundamentalist movement, from Hassan al-Tourabi to Osama Bin Laden
The Struggle for Islam
MARK HUBAND

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Copley News Service

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Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, political commentator for *Al-Ahram*

"An excellent and important work . . . it fills the urgent need to challenge contemporary mythology that political violence in the Arab world (or elsewhere) can be explained by mere reference to Islamic culture or religion."
François Burgat, author of *l'Islamisme au Maghreb* and *l'Islaisme en face*

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Sir Allan Ramsay, former British Ambassador to Morocco

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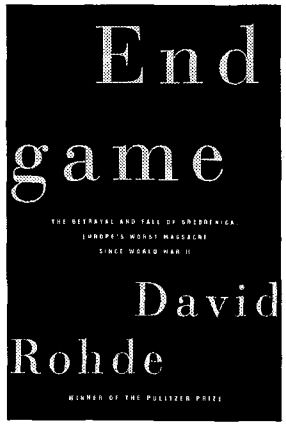

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FROM WASHINGTON

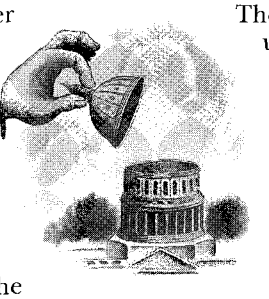
Super markets

As one "emerging market" after another goes into the tank, people are asking: Does the spreading financial bankruptcy prove the intellectual bankruptcy of free-market economics itself? "Authorities are clinging wishfully to the reigning free-market orthodoxy, as it breaks down before their eyes," writes William Greider in *The Washington Post*. "The laissez-faire theory of efficient markets did not predict this crisis and can't explain it, but theory laid the predicate. The proposition that utterly unregulated markets rule society more wisely than sovereign governments is being smashed by reality." To be sure, Greider is a veteran populist. And, characteristically, he engages in hyperbole. Who seriously took the position that markets should be "utterly unregulated"? Still, current events at least give Greider and others of his ideological hue reason to crow, and, to a large extent, they are also voicing the private fretting of more conservative members of the journalistic and policy-making elite.

Fortunately, Greider's basic point is wrong. The financial woes of Asia, Russia, and, potentially, Latin America are indeed devastating to the millions who have lost their livelihoods as a result. They do indeed jeopardize the prospects for continued high rates of growth in the U.S. economy. But they do not prove that the free-market system needs to be reined in. If anything, the current crisis shows what can go wrong when governments and international institutions interfere with the market. We are witnessing a defeat for crony capitalism, not for real capitalism.

Each of the Asian economies suffering today is, at least in part, the victim of its own archaic economic structures that rewarded politically connected insiders rather than genuine entrepreneurs. The most egregious case, of course, was Suharto's Indonesia. The dictator's family and friends controlled a network of monopolies and other inefficient businesses, including projects to develop Indonesian car and aircraft industries. Subsidies for these bloated companies soaked up much of the capital inflows to the country—money that might otherwise have gone toward financing sustainable economic expansion. Even Japan and South Korea, both far less corrupt than Indonesia, are case studies in the folly of allowing once-efficient manufacturers and financial institutions to grow fat and lazy under the protection of a solicitous government. For all its progress toward privatization, Latin America still has many key state-owned or -subsidized businesses, including the oil industries of Mexico and Venezuela.

As for Russia, despite all the talk of "shock therapy" and "radical reform," the country's economic structures have barely changed after seven decades of Communist state control. Yes, the Yeltsin government did set up a free market in foreign exchange, permitting capital to flow in and out of Russia's financial markets. But, in other key respects, state control or insider privilege remain the norm. The "privatization" of Russia's lucrative oil and gas industry was essentially a giveaway to a few government-selected insiders. It is still against the law to buy or sell agricultural land. Residential and commercial property is still largely state-controlled. This helps explain not only Russia's food and housing shortages but also the stunted development of the banking system and the insufficiently widespread distribution of individual wealth. With the productive sector of its economy thus crippled, Russia's financial sector succumbed to the speculative fever whose consequences are now evident.



The free flow of global capital is to blame for all of this only in the sense that a lot of investors made stupid decisions to put their money into questionable businesses in these patently flawed economies. Why did so many miscalculate so badly—or so greedily? Not because of any inherent problem with the free market. Rather, the problem was that the government of the United States and the multilateral financial institutions that it largely controls made the political decision to promote, then bail out, even highly risky foreign investments in these countries. The free market says that, if you buy a huge stake in a company that fails, tough luck. But Washington and the IMF repeatedly sent a different signal: when a big emerging economy—say, Mexico—goes bust, we'll step in with the cash to make sure all the foreign investors get paid.

And, if the free market is inherently flawed, why is it that some of the most financially stable and steadily growing economies in the world are those that are most open to trade and have the longest traditions of relatively unfettered capitalism? The United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia all grew at three percent or above last year and will probably do almost as well again this year. One answer is that encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and international competition has had the effects that economic theory predicts: our industries went through tough times but emerged better equipped to survive and thrive than their Japanese, Asian, and European counterparts.

A final unfashionable thought: There may well be a political upside to the economic turmoil facing Asia. Most of the economies facing recession are becoming more democratic at the same time. It's not hard to see why. Crony capitalism is the handmaiden of undemocratic, unaccountable politics. When crony capitalism collapses, so does the political framework that held it in place. Thus, Suharto has been forced to resign, and the Indonesian people are in the streets, demanding their rights. It's chaotic, but the prospects for a democratic revolution in that country have never been better. Japan's economic failures have prompted a thorough public questioning of that country's dominant political force, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the emergence of new parties across the spectrum. This was to be expected. Latin America's disastrous period of economic recession, "the lost decade" of the 1980s, was also a time of enormous political ferment in which one military regime after another was overthrown or stepped down. Even Mexico's corrupt ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party has been obliged to cede much of its power. Today, for all its economic woes, Latin America is more stably democratic than ever before in its history.

Market critics seem to slight the value, moral as well as economic, of a system that allows millions of ordinary people to choose where to work, to get paid commensurate with their productivity, and to choose where to live and what to buy. It's true, of course, that those choices are curtailed during hard economic times. But that doesn't justify an indictment of "laissez-faire." Let's at least not condemn the market before it's truly been given a chance to work.

CHARLES LANE

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 2, 1998

THE HATE DEBATE

The horrific murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming who was severely beaten and then lashed to a fence post and literally left to die, has created a national outcry over bigotry against gays. As this magazine goes to print, gay rights groups are descending upon the Capitol to call for enactment of more laws against hate crimes on both the state and federal levels. President Clinton, for his part, has urged Congress to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. That legislation expands the power of federal agencies to investigate crimes motivated by anti-gay animus (or hostility against someone's gender or disability), an area currently covered under a patchwork of state laws. The editorial page of *The New York Times* has also expressed the need for more hate-crime laws. The death of Matthew Shepard, the *Times* reasoned, demonstrates "the need for hate-crime laws to protect those who survive and punish those who attack others, whether fatally or not, just because of who they are."

Clearly, Matthew Shepard's murderers should receive swift and severe punishment. Furthermore, bigotry and violence aimed at gays and lesbians are real problems in our society. (The FBI estimates that anti-gay violence comprises 11.6 percent of all hate crimes. We know this thanks to the valuable Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which requires the federal government to keep reliable data on the occurrence of hate crimes.) But the proposed new federal statute is not the right solution.

The law that Clinton has urged Congress to pass would amend an existing federal statute that requires the government to impose stiffer sentences on convicted criminals when animus against certain minorities motivates their acts. In practice, this law has had little impact on the occurrence of hate crimes against the minority groups it seeks to protect, and it would probably have little effect on the occurrence of hate crimes against gays. It's hard to see how Matthew Shepard's killers would have been deterred by the prospect of federally assisted prosecution and a tough federal penalty. Under Wyoming law, and that of most states, murder is already punishable by the ultimate penalty: death.

The basic problem with which all proposed hate-crime laws must contend is that they create a legal distinction between someone who kills a gay man because he hates gays and someone who kills a gas-station attendant in order to steal from his cash register. To create such a distinction in effect penalizes some criminals more harshly, not because of their deeds, but because of their beliefs. This clashes with constitutional principles protecting free thought and equality under the law.

Supporters of hate-crime legislation insist that they aren't engaging in any special pleading. After all, they note, in the 1960s, the federal government enacted civil rights laws that made the murder of African Americans trying to exercise their civil rights (such as voting) a federal offense. The Shepard case, supporters of hate-crime laws say, shows that crimes against gays today are analogous. But the two are hardly the same. In the 1960s, federal intervention was necessary in order to redress Southern states' systematic and calculated indifference to crimes committed against blacks. The federal government had to step in because state courts refused to enforce their own laws and protect the lives and liberty of black citizens.

No such constitutional violations are at issue in the Shepard case. Wyoming's authorities aren't about to set Shepard's alleged killers free. Indeed, they'll probably seek the death penalty. And there is scant evidence that local and state officials generally have deliberately failed to prosecute the murders of gay men or lesbians.

This, then, is an exercise in symbolic politics. For Bill Clinton, endorsement of the federal hate-crime law is of a piece with his mixed record on issues of concern to gay citizens. Organizations like the Human Rights Campaign have rightly hailed Clinton for working harder on behalf of gays and lesbians than any previous president (or any conceivable Republican alternative). And he has taken symbolically important steps, such as appointing a gay man, James Hormel, as ambassador to Luxembourg—whose confirmation is being held up by Republicans because of his homosexuality—and ending the federal policy that made gays and lesbians presumptive security risks. But, when it comes to more substan-

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tive change, like a clear-cut policy permitting gays to serve openly in the military, Clinton has fallen short. At times, he has even played into the cultural right's irrational and mean-spirited abhorrence of gays. This is, after all, the president who signed the Defense of Marriage Act denying federal recognition of same-sex marriages and then aired commercials on Christian radio stations bragging about it.

When hate crimes occur, they should be identified and reported, as legislation already on the books requires. The criminals should be dealt with just as harshly as every other kind of criminal. What's needed now is not a knee-jerk reaction by Congress and the states. Fundamentally, bigotry against gays is a cultural issue, to be tackled through the determined pursuit of attitudinal change. What's needed now, then, is loud and principled condemnation of the malicious murder of Matthew Shepard and of the festering bigotry that motivated it. The American public, to its credit, delivered such condemnation swiftly. And it didn't take a hate-crime law to make that happen. •

NOTEBOOK

KOSOVO CONUNDRUM: In return for NATO's refraining from a bombing campaign against his Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic has agreed to permit 2,000 international observers and NATO reconnaissance planes to monitor a withdrawal of his forces from the embattled province. The local police are to be reconstituted as a mostly Albanian force. Talks on an "interim autonomy" arrangement are to begin at once, and free elections in Kosovo are supposed to be held within nine months. One vague provision allows for a "general amnesty" for all those who took part in the barbarous campaign—except for war criminals. (Of course, Milosevic has done nothing to help the West bring Bosnian war criminals to book, perhaps since there's a good case to be made that he is one himself!) While we hope, as does everyone, that this is the prelude to a permanent peace in Kosovo, we fear it is not. The problem is that the peace plan doesn't really address the causes of the war: the Serbs' insistence on sovereignty over a province that is 90 percent Albanian and the Albanians' opposition to it. The Clinton administration is in a bit of an odd position. It opposes independence for Kosovo, since it thinks this would destabilize the surrounding region. Rather, it favors autonomy for the province within the Yugoslav federation that Milosevic controls. Thus, even though Washington and its NATO allies threatened to bomb Milosevic's forces because of their awful deeds in Kosovo, the United States opposed a military victory by the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). In this sense, it was relatively easy for the administration to reach a compromise with the dictator in Belgrade, since the two parties had a convergence of interests—notwithstanding President Clinton's remark about graveyards filled with Milosevic's promises. As in the Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia, the United States has made a bargain whose fulfillment depends on Milosevic, thus ironically justifying the dictator's hold on power in Belgrade. Milosevic knew this; for all his posturing, his acceptance of the Americans' terms was basically inevitable. Thanks largely to U.S. and European passivity, Milosevic has been able to milk his war for maximum demagogic benefit in Belgrade and even to achieve tactical victory on the ground—albeit at the cost of hundreds of lives and 200,000 refugees. Winter is coming—bad fighting weather for the decimated and poorly armed KLA guerrillas (and bad living weather for the refugees). It will be a long time before the KLA can regroup to challenge Milosevic's army. But it almost surely will try because Serbian atrocities have radicalized the Albanian population and fueled a general desire for vengeance. Milosevic undoubtedly assumes that, by then, he'll be free to resume the battle if he sees fit. The West's attention will have wandered. Moreover, Milosevic must be aware that the United States, through United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, recently cut a similar deal to forestall the bombing of Baghdad. When Saddam Hussein violated it, the Clinton administration did nothing. In foreign policy, everything is connected to everything else.

THE WAGES OF SEN: We note with delight the awarding of the Nobel medal in economics to our friend and contributor Amartya Sen. His contributions to the economic understanding of the developing world are well known, but this economist is also one of the most gifted and original philosophers of our time. Owing to his rare ability to think theoretically and empirically at the same time, to link the critical analysis of values to the critical analysis of policies, he has altered the contours of contemporary moral philosophy and contemporary political philosophy. In Sen's work, compassion is given an unprecedented basis in intellectual rigor. He is a great universal liberal. In our pages, his essays "Freedoms and Needs" (January 10 & 17, 1994) and "Human Rights and Asian Values" (July 14 & 27, 1997) were especially trenchant and influential interventions in the great debate about liberalism and development. And finally the Nobel mandarins have honored a man whose work is absolutely useless to the managers of hedge funds.

EXCELLENCE DETECTABLE: We are pleased and proud to announce the publication of several books by members of the TNR family: *Blizzard of One* (Knopf) by poetry editor Mark Strand; *Cultural Calisthenics: Writings on Race, Politics, and Theatre* (Ivan R. Dee) by theater critic Robert Brustein; *Love Undetectable: Notes on Friendship, Sex, and Survival* (Knopf) by senior editor Andrew Sullivan; and *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) by U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, our former poetry editor. Congratulations, every one. •

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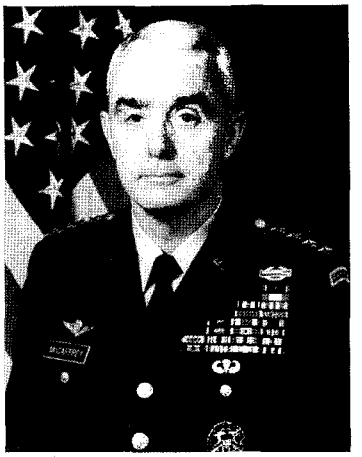
General McCaffrey says the Dutch approach to drugs "hasn't worked."



The Facts say: It has!

ISSUE	United States	The Netherlands
Use of marijuana by older teens (1994)	38%	30%
Use of marijuana by 15-year-olds (in 1995)	34%	29%
Heroin addicts (in 1995)	430 per 100,000	160 per 100,000
Murder rate (in 1996)	8.22 per 100,000	1.8 per 100,000
Crime-related deaths	8.2 per 100,000 (1995)	1.8 per 100,000 (1994)
Incarceration rate (1997)	645 per 100,000	73 per 100,000
Per capita spending on drug-related law enforcement	$81	$27

Are we so committed to past mistakes that we cannot shift to more effective strategies?

Visit Drug War Facts at: www.drugsense.org

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These facts are based on official statistics from Holland and the United States.
Citations are available from the Web site of the Netherlands http:www.netherlands-embassy.org/drug-inf.htm or from Common Sense

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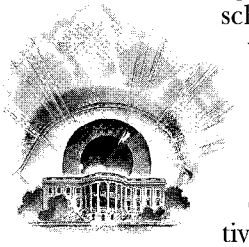
WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE LADIES VANISH

By Dana Milbank

The scandal-fatigued will despair to learn that this is yet another White House Watch column about the Clinton administration's woman problems. But wait—it's not what you think. This one is about gender, not sex (sorry, Mr. Starr). There will be no mention here of Monica or Paula or Gennifer, and the women involved would never be mistaken for bimbos.

The setting is Lorraine Voles's bathtub, one night in September 1997. Voles, who then worked in the White House as a top aide to Vice President Gore, is scrubbing her two young children. The phone rings, but she doesn't answer it. Next, she hears the pager beep in her bedroom. She retrieves the device and discovers the White House operator is trying to get a call to her from a certain senior official. "Sir, can I call you back in half an hour?" she asks the vice president of the United States. "I have both of them in the tub." At that moment, she makes up her mind: "It's time to go." Soon after, she quits, taking a job in the private sector with flexible hours. "Somebody was losing every day," she says now. "My kids, my husband, the v.p., me."



Early in his first term, President Clinton set out to create an administration that looked like America. But, in his administration's twilight, only six of his 29 top-level "assistants to the president" are women—and those tend not to be in the key positions. One big reason for this: Women have found that mothering and governing don't mix well. Of the six top-level women, two have adult children and the other four are childless. But many of the president's male advisers have young children at home. Paul Begala, Phillip Caplan, Rahm Emanuel, Ron Klain, Joe Lockhart, Bruce Reed, Larry Stein, Craig Smith, and Mike Waldman all have young children. At the next level of advisers, the disparity is similar.

Of course, some will say this is no different from any corporate suite, law firm, or other high-pressure workplace. But this is Clinton's White House, which has devoted itself to family-friendliness and has made a top priority of gender equality in the workplace. If promoters of such a lofty vision can't make it work in their own house, what hope is there that government policies can be successful at fixing the imbalance elsewhere?

Women who have left the White House to care for children, and the few who struggle to remain, are virtually unanimous in the view that the Clinton White House has made heroic efforts to keep them on the job. "I don't know what more they could have done," says Kim Tilley, who tried to go back to work in the White House after her child was born but left after six months. In Voles's case, the vice president even hired an extra aide so she wouldn't have to travel and could leave work daily at 5:30 p.m. And, for all his workers, Clinton ordered expanded family and medical leave (the same benefits he supports for all Americans).

But beyond this, it seems to me, the Clinton White House does far less than many corporations do to keep women on the job. Part-time work is virtually unheard of in the building. Telecommuting is extremely rare. (Among other problems, White House security makes it difficult to get e-mail at home.) There is little if any of the job sharing, flexible schedules, and consulting arrangements that corporations use. And there is no on-site day care at the White House. The White House day care center is a few blocks away and has a waiting list of several months for young children.

Family-friendliness has also collided with another Clinton goal: a leaner and more efficient White House staff. The White House staff level (excluding OMB) is 1,100, a 25 percent reduction from the Bush years, the White House says. As a result, top aides now have fewer underlings for menial work. The White House work ethic, which makes a virtue of face time, encourages late-night work even if it isn't necessary. "Some of this schedule craziness is staff-induced," says one woman who left.

Some women who stay are single or divorced and simply put their family lives on hold. "I view this as a tour of duty like you'd do in the military," says Janet Murguia, deputy director of the White House's legislative office. Contemplating her hours on the job, Murguia adds, "It's almost scary." Clinton aides routinely work twelve-hour days. Because of burnout, the average tenure of a White House staffer is said to be 18 months.

In some ways, the Clinton White House goes to great lengths to promote a family-friendly atmosphere. When senior advisers gathered to plan a major education initiative, Gene Sperling's godchild was in the room watching the Disney Channel. Amy Weiss, a deputy press secretary who often brings her two-year-old son, Jack, to the office, recalls how he once gave her the slip and ran straight into the Oval Office. The Secret Service had to retrieve him. "He's a little rambunctious," Weiss says. Voles recalls riding on Marine Two with the vice president. She was nursing at the time and took along a milk-cooling kit adorned with teddy bears. Gore noticed the bag. "Sometimes you grab the wrong bag," he said understandingly, perhaps mistaking it for a child's lunchbox. "Sir," she replied, "you don't want to know."

But this White House has not defeated the perception that women must work harder than men to get ahead. Though men often leave guilt-free for a child's ballgame or make business calls while watching the

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kids, women don't always feel as free. "Women have to work harder to crack into the boy's club," says one senior woman in the White House. "I have to do everything at a hundred or a hundred and ten percent, but, if I had kids, I'd have to do the job at eighty percent and be a mother eighty percent. It's harder for women to be at the eighty percent level. Men are more comfortable there." One mother, still working, says she feels "guilty" when she leaves at six o'clock in the evening with a stack of messages to return from her car phone. "I'm leaving some things undone," she says.

In the end, the White House also can't control the societal trends that take mothers out of the workplace more than fathers. White House women, who tend to be married to men with high-powered jobs, simply don't have the support at home that most White House men have. With a few exceptions, says Barry Toiv, a White House spokesman, "my sense is that none of their wives work. The reality is they're more likely to have a spouse who can spend more time with the kids."

And yet, some women keep trying. Karen Skelton, the White House's deputy political director, is expecting her first child this month. Already, she says, she's the first pregnant woman in Clinton's weekly strategy sessions with political advisers. She's determined to keep working after her maternity leave.

Even now, though, she says it's possible she might not return to the White House. She may opt for a more manageable job as a Justice Department lawyer. She talked about the subject with Voles and Tilley. "We'll see," they told her knowingly. Like other White House women, she, too, may be forced to choose between work and family. "In politics, you're focused more on the election cycle than the hormone cycle," she says. "Men can keep focusing on that next battle. For women, you can't keep letting all the cycles go." •

ON THE HILL

TRENT'S BENT

By Ryan Lizza

With some form of impeachment proceeding against him all but a certainty, President Clinton is undoubtedly searching for arguments to use in his defense. One place he might not have looked is the 134-page Republican-drafted addendum to the final 1974 House Judiciary Committee report on Richard Nixon. It is full of creative explanations of why presidential lying and abuse of power are not actually grounds for impeachment. And, best of all, one of its ten GOP coauthors is a Mississippian who was then a 32-year-old committee member: Trent Lott.

Back in 1974, Lott was a pro-Nixon bitter-ender. Now, of course, he's the Senate majority leader—and one of Clinton's principal antagonists. Indeed, just the other day, Lott offered this expansive definition of what constitutes an impeachable offense: "I think bad conduct is enough, frankly, for impeachment. If you have brought disrepute on the office, that is sufficient." Lott has also told reporters that "there's an awful lot of parallels" between Watergate and Bimbroglio.

He's right. Indeed, some of the most striking parallels are between Lott's defense of Nixon and President Clinton's backers' defense of their man. In 1974, the addendum Lott signed endorsed precisely the view that Clinton's Democratic apologists are propounding today: Impeachment should be invoked only when absolutely necessary to "preserv[e] the government from being overthrown by the treachery or corruption of one man."

To be sure, just before Nixon resigned, Lott conceded that new evidence—in the form of the "smoking gun" tapes—would have impelled him to support one impeachment charge: obstruction of justice. Still, that was as far as Lott would go. Today, Ken Starr accuses Clinton of abuse of power for invoking executive privilege. Nixon also stood accused of abuse of power for, among other things, endorsing the broad outlines of a plan to subvert his political opposition that led to the Watergate break-in and using the FBI, CIA, IRS, and Secret Service for his own political ends. But Lott and his colleagues dismissed that abuse-of-power charge. They criticized the term for its "elasticity." "'[A]buse of power' is no more a high crime or misdemeanor in this country than 'maladministration'—which was explicitly rejected by the Framers of our Constitution because it was too 'vague,'" the report Lott signed argued. "Does an action ... become *per se* illegal or improper if it is motivated ... by a desire to conceal politically embarrassing information, by 'political' considerations?" After all, "no President who attempts to make full use of the lawful powers of his office is likely to complete his term without having committed, even in good faith, a constitutional violation."

Just as Clinton's defenders attack Starr's four-year, $40 million "witch hunt," so did the Trent Lott of 1974 see the *investigation* of Watergate as the real scandal. During the Judiciary Committee's debate on articles of impeachment, Lott used his opening statement to catalog the outrageous costs and vast amount of material gathered by the "most intensive investigation of any President." "Could any man withstand such scrutiny?" he demanded. "Could any man go through all of this without some evidence of a questionable statement under pressure, or while frustrated, or even without revealing some mistakes? I submit no."

To the charge that Nixon had obstructed justice by making "false or misleading statements" to the American people—the very same charge now leveled against Clinton by Starr—Lott offered an equally categorical re-

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sponse. "Are we now in the business of impeaching presidents for making misleading statements?" he asked his colleagues on the committee. In 1974, one article of impeachment accused Nixon of "failing to act when he knew" of illegal actions like the Watergate break-in, cover-up, and other crimes. The legal term for this charge, as Lott and other Republicans noted in 1974, is "misprision of felony"—that is, failure to notify civil or military authorities of evidence that a crime was committed. One crime Nixon allegedly failed to report was the misleading statements of his attorney general, Richard Kleindienst, who falsely testified before Congress about Nixon's role in a complicated antitrust case. Misprision is the same charge that David Schippers, chief counsel to today's Republican majority on the Judiciary Committee, has added to Starr's list of alleged high crimes and misdemeanors, based on the notion that Clinton knew Monica Lewinsky's affidavit in the Paula Jones case was false.

The Clinton White House's general response to all allegations of perjury has been a lawyerly parsing of the president's sworn testimony—what Lott, echoing many others from both parties, has called "splitting legalistic hairs." Interestingly, though, Lott split the very same hairs during Watergate. First, his minority report said, the testimony in question didn't violate the law because "incorrect or misleading testimony" isn't necessarily perjury. "The alleged misstatements ... are subject to the defense of 'literal truth,'" he argued. "[They] may be misleading but not in fact false" because "under the recent Supreme Court decision in *Bronston* v. *United States*"—a decision made famous again today in the legal writings of David Kendall—"the court held that testimony that is literally true but arguably misleading by negative implication is not perjury."

Even if they were lies, Lott's group argued, it didn't matter "because they were not material to the Senate inquiry." This is, of course, exactly what Clinton's defenders today claim in regard to his alleged lies about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky in his Paula Jones case deposition: they aren't illegal because the judge later ruled that the Lewinsky affair would not be part of the case. Finally, Lott and his colleagues argued, even if his subordinate's statements did qualify as perjury, Nixon had no responsibility to report it to somebody else: "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the President is a 'person in civil or military authority.'" In other words, they said, the president had already reported what he knew of the felonies to an official covered by the statute—himself. That one would probably make even Kendall blush.

When I asked about the applicability of Lott's 1974 arguments to the current situation, his spokesman, John Czwartacki, told me that Lott is refraining from commenting further on what constitutes an impeachable offense. "This is why the House will have an inquiry and answer these questions clearly," he said. But he added that Lott "certainly stands by what was said in 1974." Indeed, at the time, Lott and his coauthors said they had published their addendum to record their definition of an impeachable offense "for history." •

The perils of peacemaking.

UNDONE DEAL

By Robert Satloff

After years of running from the legacy of the last Southern Democrat to serve in the White House, Bill Clinton follows in Jimmy Carter's footsteps this week by hosting the first Middle East peace summit in the United States in 20 years. As at Camp David in 1978, the outcome for this meeting, at Maryland's Wye Plantation, is both uncertain and likely to be determined mainly by a president committed to avoiding failure at almost all costs.

Two decades ago, the central characters were an American president who lusted only in his heart, the media-savvy Anwar Sadat, and Menachem Begin, a Polish-born Zionist ideologue. The stakes were high—after five wars, would the offer of "no more war" be realized or merely join a long list of lost opportunities? And the solutions eventually reached were courageous and far-sighted: the painful trade by Israel of the Sinai Peninsula for a promise of peace; a creative plan, years ahead of its time, to negotiate "autonomy" for the Palestinians; and the commitment of billions of dollars of American aid to grease the wheels of compromise.

Today, the people and stakes are very different. Clinton is, in ways good and bad, certainly no Carter. Yasir Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu are no Sadat and Begin. According to U.S. law, the PLO leader is still a terrorist on probation, and, in contrast to the lionized Sadat, he is much less popular than the cause he advances. The Israeli prime minister is a fast-talking, Americanized *sabra*, complete with an MBA, who, in contrast to the lawyerly Begin, achieved power early in life yet has already earned more political enemies than the Likud founder ever did.

As for substance, Wye will not focus on questions of war and peace but rather on the accumulated detritus of the 1993 Oslo accords, a litany of claims and counterclaims left over from several previous "interim" agreements. While the parties may agree to a symbolic opening of long-overdue "final status" talks on Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, and Palestinian "statehood," real bargaining is months, if not years, away.

In one way, however, the Wye summit is likely to resemble its predecessor. The gulf between the parties almost surely will be solved through what has become a familiar formula: Israel gives land; the Palestinians give promises; and America tries to fill the gaps.

The major Israeli concession has already been offered. Nearly a year ago, U.S. officials told Jerusalem that progress required Israeli "redeployment"—that is,

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withdrawal—from 13 percent of the West Bank. Netanyahu cried foul, but Washington held firm. The result was one of the unhappiest periods in the history of this "special relationship." Last month, Netanyahu finally relented, accepting a U.S. face-saving solution that gives three of the 13 percent to Arafat as a "nature reserve."

While the de facto distinction between the ten percent and the three percent will soon fade, the Israeli concession does clarify the central remaining issue: verifiable steps to implement the still-unfulfilled Palestinian commitment to a "100 percent effort" against terrorism. To do so would require the Palestinians to confiscate or license thousands of illegal weapons held by Palestinians; to close down the "infrastructure" of groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad; to purge the bloated Palestinian security forces of suspected terrorists; to try killers for their crimes rather than for misdemeanors like "disturbing the peace"; and to keep convicted felons in prison for their full sentences.

But that's not all. The two sides must find a formula for the final revocation of offensive articles from the PLO charter, setting the terms for any further Israeli "redeployments," defining additional limits on Israeli settlement activity, and securing from the Palestinians a promise not to derail the process through a declaration of independence when the original Oslo expiration date comes next May. Any one of those items is explosive enough to scuttle the Wye talks.

Even so, the success or failure of the summit depends most of all on whether Arafat can satisfy Netanyahu—and his new foreign minister, Ariel Sharon—on security. Here, the gaps are wide. With a lifetime record of maintaining a "big tent" approach to the Palestinian cause—welcoming Maoists or Muslim extremists as long as they were anti-Israel—Arafat has so far fended off U.S. and Israeli insistence that he roll up the terrorists' fundraising and other front operations.

The Clinton administration has three broad options. First, having won a major territorial concession from Israel, the president could compel Arafat finally to decide between *unity* (of Palestinian ranks) and *progress* (toward peace with real security). Alternatively, Clinton could go back to Netanyahu and ask him to add further concessions on security to his concessions on territory—a scenario that has happened before but carries some political risk just two weeks before a U.S. election. Or, as in the past, Washington could make up the difference through U.S. promises, side letters, assurances, and commitments of aid.

On the key security issue, however, this may prove dangerous. Twenty years ago, Carter helped cement Egyptian-Israeli peace by offering U.S. peacekeepers in the Sinai in the event the United Nations refused to take up the task. That was wise and statesmanlike. However, the U.S.-led Multinational Force and Observers succeeded because its role was limited to routine monitoring of technical arrangements that Egypt and Israel, from the start, meticulously maintained.

Clinton is apparently thinking of updating the Carter model for the 1990s—using the CIA instead of American troops. Last week, the president sent the director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, to supervise talks on a new Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation deal whereby U.S. intelligence officers would supervise Palestinian compliance with their contractual obligations and, in a de facto sense, adjudicate security disputes between the two sides. In contrast to Sinai peacekeeping, this strategy foresees an unprecedented expansion of America's traditional role as the "honest broker" of peace.

The idea of injecting CIA officers into the interstices of Israeli-Palestinian security relations has great dangers and few advantages. On the plus side, it is a practical solution to an immediate problem: Israeli and Palestinian security officials don't trust each other. If they won't work together, then one solution is, as Netanyahu himself suggested, to let each side work with Americans. The minus side, however, is more compelling. Institutionalizing this new role for U.S. intelligence dilutes its mission. The main task of the CIA station in Israel, as in any allied country, is to liaise with local intelligence agencies. How can the same agency that works alongside Israel on terrorism, missile proliferation, and other threats also serve as an impartial judge in the adversarial relationship between Israel and the Palestinians?

Also, this on-the-ground role for U.S. intelligence would inject the United States into the daily minutiae of a dispute to which, despite our warm ties with Israel, we are not a party. Washington would be the ultimate arbiter of who has too much blood on his hands to serve in the Palestinian police and when a convicted terrorist should get paroled from a Palestinian jail. Already, the official website of Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization has warned about this new U.S. role: "[E]very inch of land that would be liberated from Israeli Zionist occupation would fall under the control of a new occupier—the United States."

Third, the new role only accentuates a task—assessing Palestinian compliance—for which the administration has a poor track record. A review of the last four years' worth of legally mandated State Department appraisals of Palestinian compliance with Oslo shows that the department has studiously avoided condemning violations. The reason is obvious: the administration knows that an honest account of Palestinian performance would give ammunition to congressional critics eager to cut off aid to the PLO. That logic, however politically pragmatic, does little to assuage those who would count on Washington to be a fair judge of the Palestinians' real performance.

The Wye summit may depend on Clinton's ability to solve the security dilemma, but a breakthrough via the Americanization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the right solution. To be sure, a failed summit would be a political catastrophe, and the acrobatics of the U.S. role—ally to one party, partner to both—remains an indispensable ingredient of success. But, for long-term U.S. interests, returning from the Eastern Shore with a "virtual agreement"—on security or other core issues—only presages more costly problems down the road.

ROBERT SATLOFF is the executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

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CAMPAIGN '98

SCHUMER OR LATER

By Peter Beinart

In a dimly lit ballroom on the third floor of New York's Hilton Hotel, a voice rouses the crowd: "Introducing the next United States senator from the great state of New York." Eyes turn to the podium. But Charles Schumer isn't there. He's on a huge TV screen off to the side, apologizing for having to stay in Washington to vote on a last-ditch budget agreement. Schumer, under fire from Senator Alfonse D'Amato for missing too many votes, is determined not to give his opponent any more fodder. So he speaks from a leather chair in the Capitol, and then Iris Schumer introduces the man who has come to New York to help her husband—the president of the United States.

Campaign staff insist there is nothing significant about the fact that the president is attending Chuck Schumer's fund-raiser and Chuck Schumer is not. But, in a broader sense, this year's New York Senate race is all about what the two men are doing, and not doing, for each other. Disgraced though he may be, Bill Clinton remains the Democrat who figured out how to rid himself of liberalism's baggage. And so, in his effort to topple liberal-killer Al D'Amato, Chuck Schumer has developed a kind of Clintonism with Brooklyn characteristics. The president's hopes of bequeathing his party a political inheritance that transcends his personal failures rest on disciples like the congressman from the Ninth District of New York.

Schumer represents the New York Democratic Party's third attempt to pry D'Amato from his seat. And that history of failed efforts mirrors the trajectory of the national Democratic Party, but with a chronological lag. In 1986, two years after the Democratic Party nominated Walter Mondale for president, New York's Democrats chose an unreconstructed liberal of their own, Mark Green. Then, in 1992, four years after Michael Dukakis, New York Democrats selected state Attorney General Robert Abrams, a thoughtful, introspective man utterly devoid of the political skills needed to handle D'Amato. Like George Bush in 1988, D'Amato bludgeoned his opponent with white working-class cultural resentments—trumpeting his support for the death penalty and endlessly reminding voters of Abrams's "Fifth Avenue apartment" and "fifty-one-acre estate."

Chuck Schumer is said to have studied these failures closely. And he has responded with a strategy that echoes the one Bill Clinton has long employed nationally. A decade ago, Schumer was a man whom *The New York Times* said "wears his liberalism like a badge." But, since he began eyeing statewide office in the early '90s, Schumer has moved methodically to inoculate himself against the charges that did in his liberal predecessors. He has abandoned his opposition to the death penalty and outraged civil libertarians by voting to give the government greater wiretapping authority and to make it easier to deport suspected terrorists. He has also disavowed lavish social spending, backing the line-item veto and even proposing legislation to crack down on the abuse of food stamps. In his first policy speech of the campaign, he waxed Clintonesque, saying, "The old Democratic view that government is the answer to all problems is irrelevant."

Schumer's growing skepticism toward government regulation has also proved lucrative. He has used his seat on the House Banking Committee to forge close ties to Wall Street's large brokerage houses, repeatedly parting company with liberals who sought to make it easier for investors to sue them. And Wall Street has responded generously. In 1998, Schumer raised more than any other candidate in the country except one, Al D'Amato. And he outraised each of his Democratic primary opponents, Geraldine Ferraro and Mark Green, by more than five to one.

Schumer's evolution, like Clinton's, can be interpreted in more or less benign ways. Schumer's defenders maintain that he has always had an intuitive understanding of the cultural center. Unlike Green and Abrams, for instance, Schumer is not a Manhattanite. His congressional district—which consists mainly of Jewish and Italian middle-class neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens—strongly backs Rudolph Giuliani. Better than many Democrats, Schumer viscerally grasps the way crime can destroy a community's peace of mind. In a strangely affecting 1994 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Schumer recounted how his car had been broken into four times before it was finally stolen. "I'd wake up every morning and put on my jeans over my pajamas to run down and see if my car was still on the street," he recounted. "That's not a pleasant way to live."

But most New York Democrats see Schumer's move to the right as the product of raw ambition. "I can't think of a single issue in his entire career on which Schumer would stick by his position after he concluded it was no longer in his interest to do so," says one former colleague. Critics point to his vote against the Gulf war as proof of Schumer's lack of principle. Schumer stated publicly that he voted his conscience. Then he told supporters that he privately supported the war but voted against it because he didn't want Gentiles to think that Jews were pushing it. Staffers to New York Democrats coined the verb "to Schume" to describe the congressman's tendency to take credit for work done by other members. And several New York politicos privately accuse him of not only energetically soliciting his own supporters but of intimidating those who back his opponents.

But, whether they like Chuck Schumer or not, New York Democrats are in no position to be choosy. In fact,

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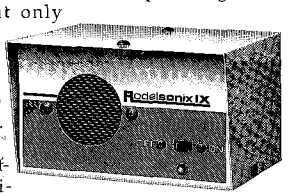

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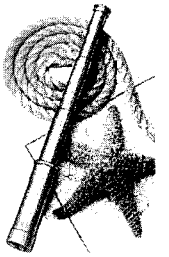

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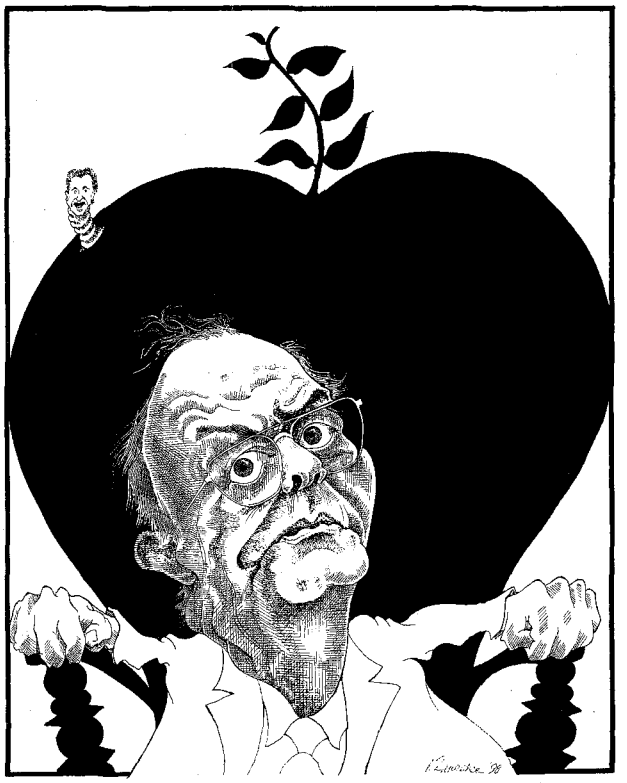
Schumer's ruthless pragmatism aptly suits the party's current mood. After decades of ascendance, losses by Abrams in 1992, David Dinkins in 1993, Mario Cuomo in 1994, and Ruth Messinger in 1997 have obliterated liberal self-confidence. In the words of political consultant Hank Sheinkopf, "[Messinger's campaign] was the last breath of the left, and it was a wheeze."

No one understands that better than Chuck Schumer. In the primary, he played down differences with his opponents, even implying that any of the three would do a perfectly fine job. But he insisted that his money and moderation made him the only one who could "go toe-to-toe with D'Amato." The argument worked. Asked what factors influenced their choice of candidate, more primary voters cited "defeating D'Amato" than "honesty" or "cares about people like me."

The New York Democratic Party's lack of ideological purity gives Schumer the same advantage over D'Amato that Bill Clinton had over Bob Dole. He can jettison inconvenient party dogmas, while the zealotry of the post-1994 congressional Republicans makes it harder for his opponent to do the same. Other New York Republicans like Giuliani and Governor George Pataki have clearly disassociated themselves from their party's leadership in Washington. But D'Amato's ambition to be a power broker in national Republican politics prevents him from acting like a Lowell Weicker-style maverick, except in the year before elections. On gun control and abortion, in particular, a long record puts D'Amato well to the right of the New York electorate.



ALFONSE D'AMATO AND CHARLES SCHUMER
BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The fate of Republican politicians in Long Island presents the senator with a worrying message: with liberal dogmatism in decline, Southern moralism may be replacing it as the object of Northern suburban enmity. Long Island is D'Amato's heartland. His Nassau County machine operates with Tammany-like effectiveness, and he needs large margins there to make up for his inevitable losses in New York City. When the Republicans won the House, Long Island had four Republican congressmen. But, in recent years, public antipathy toward the Gingrich Congress has become a serious liability for each of them. Congressman Rick Lazio defied the Republican leadership and cosponsored the Brady bill. Congressman Michael Forbes went further, calling on Newt Gingrich to step down as speaker. Peter King, who represents D'Amato's hometown of Island Park, not only repudiated Gingrich but denounced his party's ideological direction, saying, "We're going to turn ourselves into a party of barefoot hillbillies who go to revival meetings." Congressman Daniel Frisa fatefully voted to repeal the ban on assault weapons and lost to Democratic gun-control crusader Carolyn McCarthy.

The capture of places like Long Island should be Bill Clinton's legacy to the Democratic Party. By turning himself into a lightning rod for Sunbelt moralism, Clinton has decimated his party in the South. But, in his battles with Dole and Gingrich, Clinton masterfully turned that fervor against the Republican leadership, positioning himself as a figure of moderation. With liberalism's ambitions chastened, Democrats should be able to follow Clinton's lead and recapture middle-class suburbanites throughout the North—permanently splitting the blue-gray coalition that Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan built. Schumer, who is within five points of D'Amato in Long Island and Westchester, understands that well. In his stump speech, he attacks D'Amato for voting "more like a senator from Mississippi than a senator from New York."

But Chuck Schumer is still likely to lose. And therein lies the final irony of his relationship to the president. Clintonism gives him an opening, but Bill Clinton will probably keep him from exploiting it. Schumer is doing well enough in the suburbs to win, but he also needs a large turnout by his urban base. Consultant Sheinkopf estimates that Schumer must get 100,000 to 150,000 more votes in New York City than Abrams got in 1992. The scandal makes that unlikely. The president retains many supporters in New York, and barely anyone there wants him impeached. But his constituency is demoralized, and the best evidence suggests that Democratic turnout in New York this November will be dismal, particularly among African Americans and perhaps also among Jews. So Chuck Schumer is likely to meet the same fate that befell Democrats in 1996, when the campaign finance scandal ruined the party's chances of retaking the House. Bill Clinton's legacy might have been a Democratic Party newly grounded in the tolerant suburbs of the North. But that achievement, like so many others, appears to be incompatible with the president's penchant for betraying his friends. •

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A plan to save the world economy.

THE GLOBAL FIX

By Dani Rodrik

What a difference a year and a half has made to the world economy. When the Bank of Thailand gave up on defending the baht on July 2, 1997, no one could have predicted the momentous consequences that would ensue from the collapse of a currency of which few people had ever heard. In the 16 months since, the "miracle" economies of East Asia have crashed, throwing tens of millions into poverty. Russia defaulted on its external obligations and turned to the Communists. Pounded by capital outflows, Latin America has come perilously close to an East Asian-style disaster. Financial markets in the advanced industrial countries have been hammered as well, resulting in a significant slowdown in economic activity. The world economy is at the worst impasse that it has faced in a long time, possibly since the 1930s.

The good news is that a short-run fix is fairly easy to envision. The United States and Europe have to ease monetary conditions. Japan needs real fiscal stimulus. Congress has to approve new funds for the International Monetary Fund. The IMF, in turn, has to accept temporary capital controls in the countries that are otherwise following its recipes, so that they, too, can revive their economies. Of course, many things could go wrong: excessive concern for domestic price stability on the part of the Fed and the Bundesbank, political stalemate in Japan, an obstinate U.S. Congress, and a Treasury Department that is too enamored of free capital flows—not to mention a U.S. president embroiled in an impeachment fight. But, applied with sufficient resolve, these remedies would boost market confidence and prevent a global depression.

The bad news is that policy makers are clueless when it comes to the deeper question of reforming the international economic system to prevent future crises. Despite all the talk about building a new "international financial architecture," proposals emanating from Washington are remarkably timid. They center on greater disclosure and better dissemination of financial information, improved prudential regulation of financial intermediaries, and increased transparency and efficiency at the IMF. Ideas coming out of Europe—principally from Britain and France—have been more ambitious but won't get very far without U.S. backing.

Why the dearth of good ideas? Practically all discussion on institutional reform in the world economy assumes that our objective is—or should be—a functioning *global* capitalist system. It is taken for granted that an integrated world market will deliver the goods as long as we can contain some of its excesses and imbalances. The policy challenge within this frame of reference is: How do we make the world safe for free trade in goods, services, and capital?

But global capitalism is inherently impracticable. We have never truly had a global capitalist system and are unlikely to have one anytime soon. Capitalism is, and will remain, a national phenomenon. Therefore, the real policy challenge is: How do we make the world safe for different brands of national capitalism to prosper side by side? Until we make a conceptual leap and choose to address the second question instead of the first, we are not going to come to grips with the real issues and provide workable solutions to our global predicament.

To understand why, it helps to go back to *The Great Transformation* by the economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi, which was first published in 1944. Polanyi took issue with the nineteenth-century liberal idea of a self-regulating market. He argued that markets could not exist outside the web of social relations for long without tragic consequences. Indeed, he interpreted the turmoil of the interwar period and its aftermath—the collapse of the gold standard, the decline into protectionism and bilateralism, the rise of fascism and national socialism, and ultimately World War II—as the result of societies rising to protect themselves from the onslaught of the unregulated market.

Polanyi's enduring insight is that markets are sustainable only insofar as they are embedded in social and political institutions. These institutions serve three

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functions without which markets cannot survive: they *regulate, stabilize,* and *legitimate* market outcomes. That is why every functioning society has regulatory bodies that prevent unfair competition and fraud, monetary and fiscal institutions that help smooth out the boom-bust cycle, as well as social insurance schemes that help bring market outcomes into conformity with a society's preferences regarding the distribution of risks and rewards.

It is trite but true to say that none of these institutions exists at the global level. Otherwise, the ramifications of the Asian and Russian financial crises would not have been as serious: a global central bank would have provided the liquidity needed to avert the global financial panic, and global unemployment insurance would have taken care of the millions of Asians thrown out of work. This clarifies a central point: true global capitalism cannot exist short of some form of world government.

Yet the creation of such strong supranational institutions would require not only a willingness to give up national sovereignty but a considerable degree of transnational consensus as to what constitutes a desirable set of social arrangements. Neither is about to happen, for a second lesson of history is that there is no single blueprint for embedding a market economy in society.

So it is futile to discuss international economic reform as if global capitalism existed or could be established in short order. The conundrum of those working within that conceptual realm is that they can offer either effective solutions or realistic ones, but not both. Hence official ideas coming out of Washington are perforce inadequate because they have to be politically realistic—that is, based on the reality that global federalism is not around the corner. More ambitious ideas, such as the creation of a global Fed, are technically superior, but utterly unrealistic in view of the way that the world is organized politically.

What would an international system premised on the reality of widely varying national capitalisms look like? In common with today's regime, the system would adhere to multilateral procedures and the most-favored-nation principle. In particular, countries would not be able to play some trade partners against others by discriminating among them.

Second, the system would aim at low—but not necessarily zero—levels of trade barriers in goods and services. Governments would not be required to reduce or eliminate controls on capital flows—especially the short-term kind. Neither would they be asked to harmonize behind-the-border policies in areas such as industrial regulation, taxation, labor rules, or environmental standards (except where there are clear cross-border spillovers, as in the case of acid rain and some other environmental problems).

Third, and most significantly, the rules of the game would allow countries to reimpose restrictions at the border when not doing so would jeopardize a legitimate national objective. Concern for the environmental implications of certain kinds of trade, humanitarian objections to trading with a country that employs child labor, or adjustment difficulties in an industry faced with import competition might all constitute grounds for an "opt-out" of this kind. However, a government exercising this option would have to do so according to a set of guidelines that would be negotiated multilaterally and would specify the procedural requirements.

Groups of countries that are willing to implement deeper cuts in trade barriers or harmonize domestic institutions would be allowed to do so, provided they do not raise barriers against third countries.

If this sounds radical, consider the fact that the Bretton Woods system that formed after World War II—to which we owe our current prosperity—was founded on almost identical principles. Harry Dexter White and John Maynard Keynes did not contemplate a regime whose main purpose was to maximize the international flow of goods and capital. Their objective was international economic stability. They sought a system that would prevent nations from exporting their economic difficulties and that would avoid the destabilizing capital flows and excessively volatile currencies of the interwar period. For that purpose, they fixed exchange rates and left nations free to regulate capital flows.

In the trade arena, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was concerned almost exclusively with policies at the border. In successive rounds of negotiations, trade officials brought down quantitative restrictions and tariffs on imports and did so on a most-favored-nation basis. That is, all trade partners automatically became the beneficiaries of a barrier reduction negotiated with a particular partner. The rules frowned on quantitative restrictions but not tariffs. Agriculture and textiles were effectively left out of these reductions. And a safeguard clause permitted countries to raise tariffs temporarily when an increase in imports threatened a domestic industry.

These rules left enough space for national development efforts to proceed along successful but divergent paths. Western Europe chose to integrate within itself and to erect an extensive welfare state. Japan caught up with the West through its own distinctive brand of capitalism, combining a dynamic export sector with inefficient and protected services and agriculture. China recently began to grow by leaps and bounds once it recognized the importance of private initiative, even though it flouted every other rule in the guidebook. Much of the rest of East Asia relied on industrial policies—quantitative restrictions, export subsidies, and domestic-content requirements—that have since been banned by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Until the late '70s, scores of countries in Latin America, the Middle East, and even Africa generated high growth rates under import-substitution policies that insulated them from the world economy.

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What was radical, in hindsight, was the turn that events took during the 1980s. The Reagan and Thatcher "revolutions" went precisely counter to Polanyi's central insight about the need to embed markets in social and political institutions. Market fundamentalism spawned a series of myths and half-truths: that freeing up international markets was the surest way to global prosperity (that is how President Clinton put it recently); that foreign investment was key to employment and technological progress in "emerging" market economies; that free capital flows would allocate resources efficiently; that international financial markets would "discipline" governments to adopt more sound monetary and fiscal policies; that all countries were converging to a single brand of capitalism, patterned after the American model; and, perhaps most perniciously, that all of this could happen without significant inequities, economic instability, or social disruption.

Neither history nor recent evidence provides much support for any of these propositions. The relationship between trade and foreign investment on the one hand and long-term economic growth on the other is highly contingent, dependent on many other mediating factors. With regard to capital flows, there is at least four centuries' worth of accumulated evidence on their vulnerability to panics and crashes. Far from imparting discipline, financial markets actually encourage irresponsibility by borrowers (including governments) during the euphoric phases of these cycles. Moreover, there are no signs that the Europeans or the Japanese want to remake their societies in the image of the United States.

No matter. Suddenly, the United States began to act as if the Japanese retail distribution system or its labor practices were subjects for bilateral negotiation, on the grounds that these *may* have had some trade impact. The WTO struck down U.S. import prohibitions enacted pursuant to its Endangered Species Act because of concern that an open trading regime might otherwise be compromised. Emerging market economies like Mexico and South Korea were told to remove controls on international capital flows upon joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Governments fell all over one another competing for and subsidizing foreign investors. Trade and foreign investment began to trump everything else.

The cumulative effect of decisions of this type has been exactly what Polanyi would have predicted: market instability, coupled with the steady erosion of the legitimacy of the international economic system. The ongoing financial crisis has forced all concerned to take a much more cautious view of the freedom to trade paper assets across national borders. But the global economy was developing a crisis of legitimacy even before financial excess caused it to crash. The IMF, WTO, and NAFTA were dirty words to the labor and environmental movements, nongovernmental organizations, and many parts of the developing world long before the baht was devalued in July 1997. President Clinton's inability to wrest fast-track trade negotiating authority from Congress and the failure to complete the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, a charter that would uphold the rights of foreign investors, were symptomatic.

The main objection to an international economic system of the type I have proposed is the slippery slope. Without sufficient international discipline, the conventional argument goes, governments will slide back into protectionism, of the visible or disguised kind. In particular, broadening the existing safeguards agreement to allow nations to opt out for moral, humanitarian, or environmental reasons could render the international rules a dead letter.

But, if there is a slippery slope in international economic relations, the logic runs in just the opposite direction. When governments are confronted with inflexible rules that conflict with domestic requirements, they find ways to flout the rules. And that systematic flouting of the rules ultimately corrodes the system. Thus, it is far better to provide rules with well-designed, internationally sanctioned escape clauses than to allow a complete free-for-all. Had the IMF come up with intelligent advice on capital controls—rather than treating them as taboo—Malaysia might well have chosen more appropriate interventions over the complete financial autarky it is pursuing now.

The existing safeguards agreement of the WTO shows the unintended consequences of imposing unrealistic discipline. Because the agreement is so restricted in scope—requiring an import surge, a demonstration that imports are the source of "injury" to a domestic industry and compensation for affected trade partners—governments rarely turn to it. Instead, they resort to anti-dumping duties, the rules for which are significantly more flexible. For example, twelve U.S. steel companies recently petitioned the government for anti-dumping duties on imports from Russia, Brazil, and Japan. But anti-dumping is a terrible way to regulate international trade. It penalizes normal competitive behavior that is not prohibited in any domestic setting (such as pricing below unit cost during market downturns). As a result, the use of anti-dumping as the safeguard mechanism of choice has done much more damage to the trading system than a broad but well-designed escape clause would have done.

A free trade regime and a rule-based multilateral regime are not the same thing. It is the latter that deserves first priority at the moment. Any set of ground rules for the world economy that is predicated on the Holy Grail of global capitalism, as a regime of complete free trade would be, is bound to disappoint badly. It is far more productive to strive for something that has worked very well in the past and remains attainable: a regime of peaceful coexistence among national capitalisms. •

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Is Deflation Coming? An Exchange

Meltdown in the making

Effects have begun to spread quickly from what is already the worst global debt crisis in more than 50 years. Many of the once most bullish stock markets in the world are down 60 to 80 percent. Nearly 40 percent of the world's economy is in a recession or depression, and one-third of the world's labor force is either unemployed or severely underemployed. A worldwide recession suddenly seems possible. How hard could it hit the United States?

As Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan noted on October 7, this crisis poses a set of risks to the U.S. economy unlike anything that we have seen since the 1930s. Deflation, a decline in the general level of prices, is one of those unfamiliar perils now facing Japan, China, and others in Asia. It has not occurred in the United States since 1933, but it could happen again soon.

If inflation is the result of too many dollars chasing too few goods, deflation can be seen as the result of too few buyers chasing too many goods and services. Recent years have seen great price cuts in the United States, from $1,000 computers to 90-cents-a-gallon gas. The losers in this competition were generally ignored in a growing economy with a booming stock market.

All this could change quickly if deflationary pressures spread. Just as a virtuous cycle of growth and prosperity feeds on itself, a deflationary cycle can intensify a decline and be difficult to stop. The best way to assure that it does not occur in the United States, or, if it does, that it is short and mild, is to recognize the risks and act forcefully now.

However, many still dismiss the risks. Only a few weeks ago, Greenspan himself was repeating his habitual warning that accelerating inflation was still the greatest danger. The orthodox argument has been that unemployment is well below the levels at which inflation previously accelerated and that job growth remains strong. Real wages have been inching ahead faster than the anemic growth of productivity. Surely, increased costs would soon be passed along to consumers, and, despite all the previous false warnings, inflation is just around the corner.

This view was widely held until the effects of Asia's collapse on lenders' soaring risk premiums forced Russia to default and Wall Street to rescue the too-big-to-fail hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management. U.S. credit standards, which had been criticized as too lax, suddenly gave way to a credit crunch.

The Fed changed course and responded at the end of September, but with a grossly inadequate interest rate cut of only 0.25 percent. With the federal funds rate still at 5.25 percent and a federal budget surplus, it is certainly possible to stimulate the economy through further interest rate cuts, tax cuts, and new spending initiatives. The finance and trade ministers who gathered in Washington last week for the annual IMF and World Bank meetings also seemed ready to respond to bold U.S. leadership.

But none was evident. While concern is spreading rapidly over the effects of the world crisis, years of constant triumphalism about our "Goldilocks" economy have created dangerous complacency about the extent of U.S. vulnerabilities and our capacity to serve as a market for the world's excess production.

One reason this complacency is so unfounded is that U.S. consumer spending—which currently accounts for more than 60 percent of the U.S. economy—is already running at very high levels. Since 1984, the world economy has grown faster than the U.S. economy every year—circumstances under which you might expect the United States to be running a trade surplus. Yet this year's current account deficit is expected to widen to $230 billion.

Ironically, foreign borrowing to finance these massive annual deficits has converted the United States from the world's banker to the world's largest annual borrower, with net foreign obligations of $1.3 trillion. These trade deficits and finance charges are a large and constant drag on the U.S. economy, raising interest rates and limiting policy options. If U.S. consumers buy even more foreign goods and services, will there also be enough domestic spending to drive U.S. job and income growth?

A sharp slowdown in domestic consumer spending risks spreading deflation. Even strong spending has not led to significant inflation up until now. For instance, though strong growth in the first half of 1998 was due largely to extremely strong consumer spending (which grew at a real annual rate of 6.1 percent), the GDP deflator used to measure inflation of personal consumption expenditures was zero percent in the first three months of the year and rose at an annual rate of only 0.9 percent in the second quarter. The consumer price index was also virtually flat early in the year (although it bounced back to an annualized rate of about 1.6 percent during the spring and summer).

Similarly, wholesale prices have been falling for two years, and, even excluding oil, import prices are plunging. Imports of manufactured goods costing $800 billion will equal more than half the value of U.S. manufacturing this year. The price to consumers of most physical goods, from cars to clothes, has been falling at an accelerating rate for at least a year with all of our inflation coming from services such as cable television, health care, and financial services.

Meanwhile, it seems quite probable that U.S. consumer spending will soon substantially slow down. U.S. households are up to their eyeballs in record levels of debt. They are saving virtually nothing. Mortgage (including home equity), credit card, auto, and other household debt has soared far beyond any previous share of disposable income. Lower mortgage rates in recent years have helped moderate the rising cost of debt service for many, but credit card rates remain exorbitant, currently averaging 15.8 percent.

At the same time, notoriously low levels of personal savings have fallen from eight to ten percent of disposable income 20 years ago, to a range of five to six percent ten years ago, to 2.1 percent last year and less than 0.3 percent in recent months. As skyrocketing bankruptcy figures already show, such highly indebted consumers are unusually vulnerable to job or income loss.

Households have also shifted an unprecedented share of their savings out of their homes and insured savings accounts into the stock market, where irrational exuberance may have created strong but false expectations. This is particularly the case now, as overall corporate profits have fallen in 1998 after enjoying strong growth for most of the decade.

The positive effects of growth and a booming stock market encouraged consumers to spend down their savings over the past five years. It is now likely that, without prompt and strong policy steps, rising uncertainties could lead to a sharp decline in spending with very unhappy consequences, thereby spreading perilous deflationary pressures more broadly through the economy.

CHARLES W. MCMILLION

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Don't panic

For more than a year now, we've been hearing dire warnings about deflation, coupled with calls for the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates sharply to prevent such a fall in prices. The stock market's decline has no doubt contributed to the public's fear of deflation. Ironically, the Federal Reserve's recent small interest-rate cut may also have added to these worries. And Japanese Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa recently declared that the deflationary spiral is worldwide.

We see things differently. There is at present no deflation either in the United States or in the world economy as a whole. And, looking to the future, the likelihood of deflation remains remote, even if there is a recession in the next year. There have been seven U.S. recessions in the past 40 years, and prices have continued to rise in every one of them. If we had to bet, we'd say that the U.S. rate of inflation a few years from now will be higher, not lower, than it is today.

Deflation is the opposite of inflation and shouldn't be confused with "disinflation." An economy experiences deflation when the *overall* price level falls. That's different from "disinflation," which means a decline in the *rate* of inflation. The United States has benefited from disinflation since the early '80s with inflation declining from more than ten percent then to about four percent in the early '90s and about two percent in recent years. But this nevertheless remained a time of inflation, not deflation.

Changes in the level of the stock market are also distinct from changes in the prices of things we buy and use. So the recent fall in share prices doesn't signify or predict deflation any more than the tenfold rise in share prices since the early '80s constituted inflation.

Now to the data. The consumer price index increased by 1.6 percent in the twelve months leading up to August and by 2.2 percent in the most recent three months. That's a low rate of inflation, but it is not deflation. Even with an adjustment for the statistical problems that cause the price index to overstate the true rise in the cost of living, the rate of inflation remains positive.

As for the rest of the world, Japan is alone among the industrial countries in experiencing actual deflation, with consumer prices there falling 0.3 percent over the past year and at a rate of 2.2 percent in the past three months. In Europe, inflation is low but positive. Among the emerging markets, China is the outlier with consumer prices down 1.4 percent over the past year. But China's price decline reflects the restructuring of state industries, and China remains very different from the market economies in the rest of the world. Although the "crisis" economies of Southeast Asia are in recession, they are still experiencing substantial rates of inflation, ranging from 5.6 percent in Malaysia to 81 percent in Indonesia. Latin American inflation rates vary widely from Argentina's 1.1 percent to more than 30 percent in Venezuela. This is not global deflation!

So what accounts for the perception of deflation? The most obvious reason is that *some* prices *are* falling. Energy costs are the most obvious, with the prices of gasoline and other fuels down about ten percent in the past year in response to the decline in the world price of oil. Americans are also paying about one percent less for apparel than they did a few years ago. Many manufacturers are very vocal about the fact that the prices that they receive at the wholesale level are actually down significantly. But even these wholesale price declines do not translate into lower consumer prices because of the rising costs of transportation and marketing.

The price of services in general—including such things as restaurant meals, transportation, and personal services like haircuts—rise faster than the prices of manufactured goods. That persistent difference reflects the fact that most service prices do not benefit from the kind of technical change that helps to lower the prices of manufactured goods. A haircut still takes as many barber minutes as it did a decade or two ago, while the employee time needed to make a car declines every year.

Looking ahead, several indicators lead us to think that inflation over the next few years is more likely to rise than to decline or to turn into deflation. Normally, the acceleration in wage and salary increases that has occurred over the past few years would have translated into higher consumer prices already. But the fall in world oil prices and the rising value of the dollar relative to other currencies have depressed import prices and put downward pressure on domestic prices. The restructuring of health care has reduced health insurance costs, an important part of total employee compensation. Finally, unusually rapid productivity gains have kept unit labor costs from rising in line with wage inflation.

These anti-inflationary forces are coming to an end. The dollar's rise has been reversed with sharp falls relative to the yen and the European currencies. There are signs world oil prices will rise over the next year. Health care costs appear to be rising more rapidly again. And the higher productivity growth rate that has kept unit labor costs down is probably reverting to its earlier low level.

The expected slowdown in economic activity in 1999 will help restrain the rate of price increases, but the most likely market pressures will still be for inflation to be higher a year from now than the 1.6 percent inflation rate of the past year. Even if a credit crunch or some external surprise to the economy does lead to a recession, we would continue to see positive inflation. Only in the extreme case of the economy falling into a deep depression like that of the 1930s with an unemployment rate above ten percent would the level of prices actually begin a sustained decline. But there is no reason to believe that such a depression is coming. And, at the first sign of a major credit crunch or outside shock, the Federal Reserve would take the further steps necessary to raise total demand.

Deflation, like inflation, does not just happen. The behavior of prices reflects the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve. Inflation rose from about two percent in the 1960s to more than ten percent in the early '80s because the Federal Reserve was then unwilling to raise interest rates enough to halt the inflationary spiral. Only when inflation got bad enough in the early '80s did the Fed bite the bullet and accept the costs, in terms of high unemployment, of reversing several decades of inappropriate policies.

By comparison, fighting deflation would be much easier. Cutting interest rates stimulates economic growth, raises employment, and, by lowering the relative value of the dollar, makes American products more competitive internationally. If deflation ever becomes a serious threat, we have little doubt that the Fed would act decisively. And, if Fed policy alone were not enough, the administration and Congress would willingly join in the tax cuts needed to stimulate demand.

Japanese efforts to reverse deflation have failed because the government there has been unwilling to deal directly with the banking crisis and to cut taxes to stimulate consumer demand. Experience shows that America wouldn't make those mistakes.

There are many economic problems to worry about today and for the future. But deflation is not one of them.

MARTIN AND KATHLEEN FELDSTEIN

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Senator Lieberman's unorthodox politics.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE

By Gregg Easterbrook

Openly or privately, every public figure dreams of the moment when his or her name becomes the lead story. That moment arrived in September for Joseph Lieberman, Democrat of Connecticut, when he took to the Senate floor to denounce Bill Clinton as "immoral." The president's behavior had "reinforc[ed] one of the worst messages being delivered by our popular culture, which is that values are fungible." The papers led with the fact, not that a senator had rebuked the president, but that Senator Joe Lieberman, specifically, had delivered the reprimand.

Lieberman's statement got him noticed because he was the first Senate Democrat to speak against Clinton over Bimbroglio and because he directs the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), the "New Democrat" organization that Clinton helped found, and whose centrism the president avidly espouses. Years of earnest, meritorious legislative and public policy work had never made Lieberman's name national-headline material. Finally, he had graduated to the level of news event—and fittingly, in these times, for saying something harshly negative.

The circumstances of Lieberman's speech caused political commentary to become confused regarding whether he is, at heart, a creature of the left or the right. This question has long dogged Lieberman, owing to his political genealogy and his station as an Orthodox Jew; more broadly, the question dogs all New Democrats. Perhaps, though, Lieberman shows how it is possible to be liberal and orthodox simultaneously.

Lieberman spoke against the president just before the Starr report was delivered to the Hill—a time when the Democratic leadership was pressing party members to echo the White House line or, if they could not, simply to say nothing, avoiding throwing oil on the fire. Instead, Lieberman tossed on napalm. After Lieberman's speech, two other Democrats, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, rose to second him; most Democrats winced. His remarks were then praised by Republicans, as Lieberman knew they would be. His best friend in the Senate, Republican Connie Mack of Florida, crossed the aisle to sit next to Lieberman as others debated the speech. Mack was merely making a gesture of camaraderie, but, given the atmosphere, it looked like he was embracing a GOP convert.

Lieberman's speech left the obvious question: If a few episodes of consensual contact with an eager partner are not just wrong but "immoral," what words will be left to describe treason or a war crime? Lieberman says he chose the key term of his speech deliberately, out of frustration with Clinton's August 17 televised quasi-apology. "The president used the word 'inappropriate' to describe his own behavior. That suggests something like an error of protocol; it doesn't include the sense of really being wrong," Lieberman recalls. "I couldn't ignore the impact of the president's conduct on our values. So, after quite a bit of deliberation, I put in the word 'immoral' to counteract Clinton's use of the word 'inappropriate.'"

Public morality is an established Lieberman concern. He was a leading sponsor of a bill to install "V-chips" on new televisions and has often denounced Hollywood for barraging the young with images of gratuitous violence and superficial sex. But, though not out of character with previous public statements, Lieberman's anti-Clinton speech was hardly a model of pure reasoning: He began by denouncing the president and concluded by asking Congress to rally round the chief executive in a time of international stress. Less than a month later, Lieberman would tell the National Press Club, "We in Congress must find a way to inquire into the president's conduct without undermining the presidency."

Then there are the dangers, both political and ethical, of declaring open season on other people's virtue. Lieberman says politicians and the press should exercise "self-restraint" when it comes to dissecting the inevitable transgressions of private lives. But, if there is anything untoward in Lieberman's past or present, he now stands vulnerable to be denounced for it. Indeed, he would have to be denounced, under his own formulation. He who casts the first stone had better be qualified to do so.

And why did Lieberman speak when he knew that the Republicans would exploit his words? "The president wasn't dealing with this openly," Lieberman says. "Among Democrats, nobody was talking about it, and, worst of all, nobody was saying anything directly to him. My feeling was that, unless the president and Democrats spoke of these things openly, the situation could only get worse. If the president would speak of this openly, he might be able to rebuild enough trust to finish his term." On this point Lieberman appears vindicated.

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Clinton has confessed his errors and expressed penitence; polls show most Americans are giving him a break. Perhaps Clinton would have switched to the contrition strategy without a push from Lieberman. Still, the fact remains that White House humility commenced in the days after Lieberman's speech.

Lieberman has spent nearly all his life either in Connecticut or representing it. The son of a Stamford liquor-store owner, he attended Yale and Yale Law School and then ran for the state senate—assisted by a campaign volunteer named Bill Clinton, then also at Yale Law. Eventually, Lieberman won election as the state's attorney general. He became a popular consumer advocate, winning an antitrust case against supermarket chains that yielded the state's voters $21 million—in coupons, not cash. In 1988, Lieberman ran a come-from-behind Senate campaign that barely defeated Republican incumbent Lowell Weicker. In 1994, the year of Newt Gingrich, Lieberman won reelection by a landslide.

In 1988, Weicker often accused Lieberman of running to the right. Concerned mainly with consumer and environmental affairs as attorney general, Lieberman endorsed the death penalty for drug traffickers, the 1986 Libya bombing, school moment-of-silence laws, and other conservative issues as the Senate race approached. In the Senate, his voting record has been similar to Weicker's—moderate or mildly liberal overall. Still, news organizations like *The Denver Post* call him "the conservative Senator Joe Lieberman."

Today Lieberman supports choice on abortion, campaign finance reform, regulation of HMOs, an increased minimum wage, tough environmental laws, and other liberal causes; he also favors school vouchers, high defense spending (they build helicopters and submarines in Connecticut), and free trade. He was the key Senate Democrat to side with George Bush on the Gulf war resolution. Lieberman vehemently opposed Clinton's 1993 health-care-reform initiative. Connecticut is headquarters for several insurance conglomerates; perhaps this colored Lieberman's view, though there were arguments against the plan regardless of what home-state employers might have thought.

Whatever the complex mélange of left-right policies that Lieberman endorses, since 1988 the perception has been that he attained the Senate by being a Democrat who outflanked a Republican on the right. This, in turn, is what the DLC was created to do on a national scale.

As governor of Arkansas, Clinton was the chairman of the DLC, whose goal was to counteract Reaganism by incorporating modified Republican ideas into the Democratic agenda, bringing about "neoliberalism" or a "third way." Lieberman was a key player. By the mid-'80s, the Democrats "had become a party of ideological atrophy and interest-group accommodation, of status-quo protection and tunnel vision," Lieberman said recently. This is roughly the way in which, during the 1970s, the New Right spoke about the Republican Party. In each case, the emerging faction supplanted the entrenched party in energy, intellectual vigor, and, soon, ballot success—the New Right taking Washington in the 1980 election, the New Democrats taking it back with Clinton's ascension in 1992.

Lieberman says: "The DLC had a series of ideas about reconnecting with American values. We favored deficit-cutting and fiscal responsibility; reforming a welfare system that had become a metaphor for Democratic willingness to break the American work ethic; getting on the right side of crime; breaking the image that Democrats were more concerned with the rights of criminals than the trauma of victims; having a strong defense, so strong that Bill Clinton could run against a war hero in 1996 and have national security not be an issue in the campaign; liking the middle class and helping more people get into it; expanding the circle of opportunity instead of trying to penalize the people already there. So here comes Bill Clinton and puts this series of DLC ideas into effect, and, by God, they turn out to work. New Democrat thinking is one of the main reasons that life has gotten better for so many people in the country." In this sense, Lieberman clearly struggles with the problem of whether Clinton, if he's done the country so much good, really deserves to be denounced.

After Democrats lost the November 1994 elections, Lieberman loudly said the defeat was due to party interest groups that had strayed from New Democrat moderation. When the chairmanship of the DLC came open in early 1995, Lieberman took it. Since then, he has steered the DLC toward market-based environmental solutions and cultural issues, including Hollywood mindlessness, porn on the Web, and respect for religion.

An example of the type of hybrid cause Lieberman likes is "auto choice." This would allow people to buy car insurance for about one-third less by signing away their right to sue for pain and suffering caused by accidents, retaining only the ability to sue for medical and economic damages. Such an option might save a typical adult $300 to $500 a year, more than most tax-cut proposals. Since Connecticut's insurance conglomerates would love to be rid of pain-and-suffering litigation, auto choice might be seen as client politics. But, to advance it, Lieberman must oppose the tort bar, one of the most powerful Democratic constituencies. He does not shrink from this task, recently saying in another context that to limit pain-and-suffering awards is better than "allowing trial lawyers to reap a bonanza." Few PAC-conscious Democrats would allow such words to pass their lips.

Most Republicans would, however. The frequent objection to New Democrat thinking is that it sails in the other side's waters. Old-school Democrats consider the DLC too enamored of free trade and business and insufficiently committed to women's issues and minority rights. Auto choice is mainly the brainchild of a law professor named Jeffrey O'Connell and the conservative maverick Michael Horowitz; the mention of Horowitz's name makes steam pour from the ears of the Democratic left. Lieberman often makes appearances with

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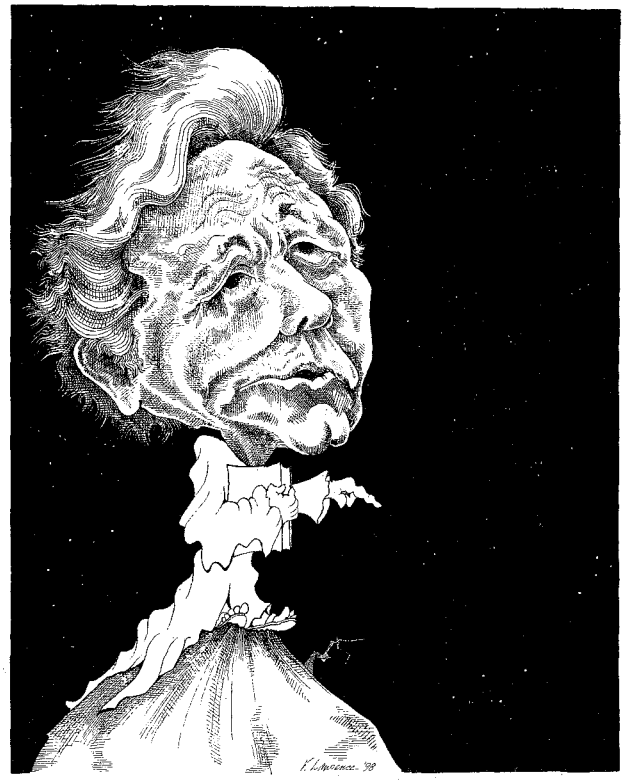
such conservative Republicans as Senator Daniel Coats of Indiana and with the right-wing firedrake Bill Bennett. None of this sits well with party liberals.

But why shouldn't DLC thinking embrace whatever ideas are best for the country, regardless of ideological aroma? With welfare reform, for example, Clinton and the New Democrats took what had once been a proprietary Republican issue, managing to combine the right-hand concern that public money be well-spent with the left-hand concern that recipients not be suddenly abandoned. The result was a realistic initiative that today appears to be transforming both the economics and psychology of a supposedly intractable problem.

If New Democrat thinking is mainly a good thing, the question becomes whether Clinton's decay will discredit New Democrat ideas. When Lieberman gave his speech, many assumed his true goal was to disassociate the DLC from the president. Lieberman says that's not the case, arguing that New Democrat theory has acquired enough momentum to survive on its own. "Clinton is an unusually skillful politician, skillful enough to move the party toward the center without breaking it," Lieberman says. "Now that this shift has been accomplished, I take the president's continuing good poll numbers at least in part as a referendum on the New Democrat ideology that he has governed by. Most Americans approve of the New Democrat agenda. If the president leaves office that will hurt, but it won't be fatal." Lieberman believes the DLC has far more to fear from left-of-center Democrats who relish the chance to roll back neoliberal policies.



JOSEPH LIEBERMAN
BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the aftermath of the anti-Clinton speech, it was common for news accounts to note that Lieberman is the Senate's only Orthodox Jewish member. The papers portrayed this as a lifestyle issue, mentioning that, on the Sabbath, Lieberman walks to shul or the Hill (no driving allowed on the day of rest) or that he was not present at the 1988 state convention that nominated him for the Senate because its business was done on a Saturday. The impression was that Lieberman's denomination represented some kind of quirky handicap he nonetheless rose above to be a modern man. Not raised was the possibility that Orthodox Judaism informs his being, including his independence.

In standard cultural analysis, religious traditionalism is assumed to be the same as political conservatism. Often the two overlap, but the combination is far from mandatory. Jimmy Carter, for example, is both a Christian evangelical and a political liberal: that he felt tightly bound by his faith and obligated to spread it did not conflict with his reaching a liberal understanding of the secular world. Religion generally seeks to impose a worldview, but what that worldview should be is the subject of endless argument. Though many of the Orthodox are conservative, it's not because faith says they must be.

"There is a general rightward movement in Orthodox Judaism today, but I am not part of that," says Lieberman. "The word I use to describe myself is observant. To me, being observant means following the rituals by which I was raised, such as Sabbath rules and dietary laws and drawing on the historical body of ethical precepts and experiences of Judaism. But I see no reason why a person can't be Orthodox and also an independent thinker. The whole history of the Talmud is one of questioning and discussion. My religious experience encourages independence of judgment."

Many Old Testament prophets, after all, took on the religious establishment of their day. Orthodox Jews who invoke Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, or other biblical prophets to justify reactionary views are calling upon men who were heedful of religious stipulation but were political radicals—just as fundamentalist Christians who call on Jesus to justify rigid doctrine are calling on the leading nonconformist of history.

We're so accustomed to images of the televangelist Christian hypocrite, the threatening Islamic extremist, or the intolerant Orthodox Jew that we think they symbolize the main current of the three great monotheist faiths. Contemporary culture seems to ignore the possibility that a person might embrace the customs and forms of a traditionalist faith, as Lieberman does, yet remain open-minded—or the possibility that faith can constructively shape political and personal philosophy. Thus, a better symbol is Lieberman, whose religious background may indeed make him too quick to hurl words like "immoral" but otherwise has instilled in him responsibility and introspection. Observance of tradition coupled with independence of mind is a worthy combination and one reason Lieberman ranks among the Senate's best. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Two Gatherings

All of us carry bombs around inside us that are just waiting for the right fuse to set them off. At least this belief has been the basic device of countless plays and films. My own first encounter with it was J.B. Priestley's *Dangerous Corner*, which was the country-weekend version (still much used) in which a group gathers for a party or an anniversary or whatever, and the mere juncture of these people in one place burns away the covering over buried feelings, feelings that may have been hidden for years.

A new instance of the device, and a good one, is American. **Bad Manners** (Phaedra) was adapted by David Gilman from a play of his that was produced in Chicago and New York. Its theater provenance is clear: from beginning to end, it struggles against its stage origins, and that struggle is a sort of counterpoint to the struggle in the story itself. In both cases the struggle engages.

The place is Cambridge, the home of two professors, man and wife, who do not teach at Harvard, played by David Strathairn and Bonnie Bedelia. Another couple comes to stay for a few days, another professor and his young assistant, played by Saul Rubinek and Caroleen Feeney. They are lovers. When we learn that Rubinek and Bedelia had been lovers back in their student days and have not seen each other for twenty years, we feel we know what is coming. Well, we do and we don't.

The detonations caused by this latter-day encounter are not from the recurrence of the old affair. They result from the character of Feeney, a clever sexual gourmet, and from Rubinek's professional ego. Her cool provocations discomfort the hosts, while Rubinek is going through a trial of his own. He is a musicologist, and he has with him a recording of a musical composition by a Vietnamese, computer-created, with which Feeney has been assisting him. He has come to show Harvard musicologists his discovery—that within this seemingly haphazard foreign composition suddenly occur the opening notes of the Lutheran hymn "A Mighty Fortress." On this accident Rubinek has built a theory, and he is here to get recognition from Harvard for his work.

Another plot thread, which thickens as we follow it, concerns a missing $50 bill. Strathairn believes it was stolen from him by one of his two guests; the steps taken about this embarrassment get more and more tangled.

These two elements, the music and the money, set off explosions of matters that were dormant in all these four people before they got together. But the medium through which everything moves, like a sea in which the dangers float, is sex: sex as observed, teased, proffered by Feeney. She is smooth, arrogant, perceptive, disruptive. The results of her actions have a certain echo of the discovery of the Lutheran hymn in the middle of that computer mix.

Jonathan Kaufer, the director, has striven intelligently to keep his film mobile and lithe, but with just adequate results. His real feat is in his casting and his work with the actors. Strathairn gives us a sufficiently individualized account of the role that William Hurt does in *One True Thing*, the middle-aging academic who is on the edge of fossilization, knows it, and is defensively smug about it. Rubinek, previously encountered only in pudgy minor roles, here has a pudgy major one and gives it more color than we might have expected.

But, in acting terms, the picture belongs to the two women. Bedelia, veteran of many films and remembered from a few (notably *Heart Like a Wheel*), is dignified, humorous, lovely. Every moment is packed with caution and self-reliance as she deals with the impact of the past, in Rubinek, and with the risks of the present, in Feeney. Feeney herself is a discovery. She has been in only a few films, but she has the poise of success—that immediately perceptible air of the actor sure of herself, not in egotism but in experience. She moves through this film like a sexy glacier, seductive and chilling. Her timing is perfect, her inflections disturbing. She is welcome.

Courtesy obliges a mention of Julie Harris, long esteemed in theater and film, who appears briefly and comfortably as the guru of the Harvard music department.

The basic idea—of a gathering with dire results—gets still another go-round in **The Celebration** (October). This is a Danish film in which a large family meets at the country house of the patriarch on his sixtieth birthday. The director is the 39-year-old Thomas Vinterberg, a member of a group of filmmakers called Dogma 95 whose manifesto is publicized along with the film. Among its tenets are

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Firelight. *A serviceable Victorian tale of mother love, with Sophie Marceau grave and touching as a young mother in search of her child. (Reviewed 10/12/98)* **Lolita.** *Closer to Nabokov than the 1962 version, but again unfulfilled without Nabokov's prose tapestries. Still, Dominique Swain is childishly lubricious and Jeremy Irons suffers nicely. (10/5/98)* **Regeneration.** *Siegfried Sassoon's stay in a "shell-shock" hospital during World War I because he protested the war. Intelligently written and acted. (9/14&21/98)* **Saving Private Ryan.** *Steven Spielberg's D-Day is titanic. But what follows is just a good, wry, gritty war movie. (8/17&24/98)* **—SK**

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a promise not to use artificial light and always to use actual locations, instead of sets. So far as I could see, Vinterberg kept his word, if it was worth keeping.

What Dogma 95 has not broken with, however, is triteness of structure. *Bad Manners* takes the old matrix and freshens it; *The Celebration* simply leans lazily on it. What's worse, Vinterberg and friends seem to have felt a Scandinavian obligation—call it an adolescent view of Bergman—to plunge into psychological murk.

This Danish family has a large assortment of complaints and long-buried resentments, and most of them derive from the fact that the paterfamilias sexually abused his children when they were small. More: he has little regret about it now. As the wine flows, the locks on these buried secrets burst, and each person in the group has his or her own emotional arabesque. But it's all too patterned, too strictured—about people who don't interest us much in any case—to seem anything more than the working out of a tired story design. As soon as the clan is gathered, we just wait for the explosions, which are damp.

Bad Manners is a much more affecting example of this venerable genre, because the screenplay is more intelligent and because the performances, though there are only four of them, are far more subtle and wily.

Correction. Reviewing *Lolita* four weeks ago, I said that the screenplay omits the word "nymphet." Stephen Schiff, the adapter of the novel, points out that the word *is* used in the screenplay—twice. Double apologies. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Ways to Break the Silence

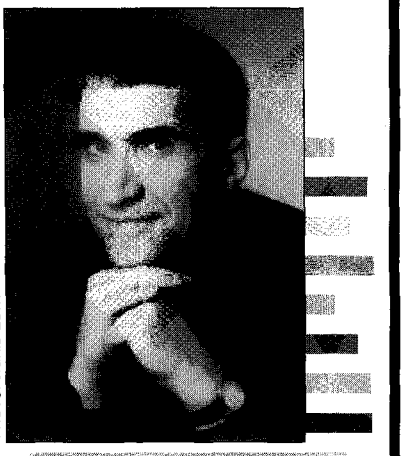
For a number of years now, critics have been complaining that language is no longer a key element of the theater, having been displaced by music, spectacle, and special effects. But as a matter of fact, words have rarely been the most important component of contemporary drama—or of classical drama before Shakespeare. (Analyzing the elements of tragedy, Aristotle didn't rate language at the very top of his list either.) Ibsen's famous contribution to modernism was to sacrifice verse altogether, though he was a master poet, in favor of what he called "the genuine, plain language spoken in life." After Ibsen, dramatic characters were destined to speak colloquial prose or nothing at all.

Most contemporary playwrights followed Ibsen in believing that it is better to show than tell, that a good stage picture is worth a thousand words. This development may make literary people nervous. But which dramatist strikes us as more powerful—the verbose Christopher Fry or the taciturn Anton Chekhov? Who will last longer—the garrulous Sean O'Casey or the laconic Samuel Beckett, some of whose plays do not contain a single word? For better or for worse, the growing importance of "subtext" and "symbolic action" has virtually banished verbal poetry from the modern stage.

In America, the war on language has been exacerbated by movies and by rock concerts, the one characterized by dazzling visual images and musical soundtracks, the other by a barrage of sometimes undifferentiated pulses and beats. Yeats's "rough beast," loutish and incoherent, was on the road to Bethlehem the moment Thomas Edison invented the phonograph and Eadweard Muybridge started tinkering with moving images. As these influences on the populace grew more powerful, the nature of dramatic character changed accordingly. Compare Ralphie Berger in Clifford Odets's *Awake and Sing* with Stanley Kowalski in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, just twelve years later. The one is a speaker, fluently analyzing his family and his social condition, the other an uneducated *untermensch* who can express himself only through violence, rage, and rape.

It doesn't help the case for language that the inarticulate Kowalski is the more indelible (and the more imitated) character of the two, no matter how badly he treats his sister-in-law. The elegant and civilized, if sexually crippled, Blanche DuBois may implore her sister Stella not to hang with the brutes; but Stella and Stanley come together "with low animal moans" while the delicate Blanche loses the battle for survival in this animalistic world. By formulating such a conflict, Williams was obviously suggesting that poetic feelings and expressive language

"PINSKY HEARS AMERICA SINGING..."*



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FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

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were being obliterated by the orgiastic grunts of the lumpenproletariat.

Watching three recent productions in New York—one appropriate for Stanley Kowalski and the rock generation, the others more suitable for Blanche Dubois and the college-educated classes—I was nevertheless convinced that the war against language was far from over, that there were still a variety of ways to break the silence. If two of these shows made us grateful for the gift of eloquent language, the other proved that theater can continue to exist without words.

The case against language was argued by De La Guarda's **Villa Villa** at the Daryl Roth Theatre in Union Square. Created and directed by Pichon Baldinu and Diqui James, this group is a young Argentine company founded in 1993 and composed of acrobat-singer-dancers from Buenos Aires. It is also composed of the audience, since spectators are totally engulfed in the action in a manner reminiscent of Andrei Serban's *Fragments of a Trilogy* at La Mama. You enter a large square area, formerly a bank, with no seats, and you stand on your feet for over an hour, crushed and jostled by the other people in the room. Somehow the experience is exhilarating, as if you were being swamped by an emotion of multitude.

First you discern some vague shadows flying over your head, dimly perceived through a paper ceiling. The ceiling is pelted with raindrops that, through a trick of lighting, soon give the illusion of a starry firmament. Suddenly a figure crashes through the ceiling, feet first, and carries a screaming female spectator aloft, groping her behind (don't worry, she's a plant). Before long, the entire ceiling has been ripped away, and you are watching sixteen men and women, equipped with bungee cords and waist harnesses, zooming back and forth, up and down, in aerial flight, singly and in groups, sometimes forming a conglomerate mass like some hydra-headed alien creature.

The remainder of the evening provides multiple variations on flying, bungee jumping, and wall-walking, to the accompaniment of earsplitting music (mostly percussion) and strobe-light effects. Two women, in perfect synchronization, scramble up and down a silken scrim like twin flying monkeys. One man, standing on a platform over another man who is hanging upside down, keeps preventing the poor wretch from righting himself. The air is dense and humid, hydrated by water spouts falling from the ceiling, and at one point the space is filled with balloons. Members of the troupe are likely to break these balloons between their bodies and yours, when they are not crawling around like snarling animals at your feet and pretending to bite your behind.

This may sound impossibly intrusive to you, like those performance group actors of the '60s and '70s who were always climbing over your seat and sweating over your suit. Take my word for it: most of this seventy-minute presentation is absolutely thrilling. Words are spoken, shouted, or sung during the course of the evening. Not one is recognizable. De La Guarda uses language more as a form of incantation than communication, and the audience responds as it would at a rock concert, a revival show, or a "rave" party, dancing and singing and gyrating with the actors. "We would like to bewitch you all, to thrill you like crazy and get under your clothes," the company announces in a program note, elsewhere adding this description of artistic intention: "Everything started with the uncontrollable desire to explode, to expand, to choose a space and take complete hold of it.... The tide produced by the audience is a fundamental part of the emotional upheaval of this show, where everything is fragile, everything is changeable except our tempests. The victim is reality." It is a manifesto that echoes the imagery and intentions expressed by Antonin Artaud. *Villa Villa* is much more good-natured than *The Theatre of Cruelty*, but Artaud would undoubtedly have rewarded the show with one of his gap-toothed smiles.

If my enthusiasm for De La Guarda sounds like I too may be hanging with the brutes, let me add that, within hours of this experience, I was able to reenter a world of literacy, nuance, and sensibility. The occasions were Margaret Edson's **Wit** at the MCC Theater and Robert Pinsky's version of Dante's *Inferno*, presented by the Unterberg Poetry Center at Playhouse 91. I won't review the Dante, since virtually everybody associated with the show except the translator has been a colleague or student of mine at one time or another. I'll simply say that it was a pleasure to hear Pinsky's supple translation spoken aloud, though I wasn't altogether convinced it needed actors instead of readers, or a stage instead of a lectern.

Wit, on the other hand, is an eminently playable work, and it is receiving a superb production under the direction of Derek Anson Jones, with a first-rate cast headed by the enchanting Kathleen Chalfant. Edson uses the word "wit" in the Elizabethan rather than the Wildean sense, as equivalent to intelligence, insight, and discernment. This is appropriate, considering that the heroine is a professor of seventeenth-century literature and a specialist in John Donne. Vivian Bearing has been working on the *Holy Sonnets*, particularly the one that begins "Death be not proud," for an article in the Oxford English Dictionary. The choice of poem is cruelly apt. At the relatively young age of fifty, she has contracted an advanced case of ovarian cancer. Now, like Donne, she must learn to conquer death through language, courage, and transcendence—"And death shall be no more: death, thou shalt die"—figurative ways of killing her fear of mortality.

The playwright, aside from holding advanced degrees in history and literature, has worked on the cancer inpatient unit of a research hospital. She may parade her scholarship a bit too self-consciously at times, but she knows exactly what she's writing about. It was Shaw who said that playwrights often identify their heroes as people of genius without providing any evidence of intelligence (which is why Shaw compiled John Tanner's "Revolutionist's Handbook"). He could hardly have leveled the same charge at Margaret Edson. Although this is a first play, she has drawn suggestive parallels between the way a scholar tracks down the meaning of a poem in order to illuminate literature and the way in which a doctor explores the body of a cancer patient in order to advance research.

The trouble is that Vivian Bearing is obviously incurable, and the medical research that extends her life only lengthens her pain and suffering. She is forced to endure a four-hour operation, and the superfluous agony of eight full courses of chemotherapy. She has a tumor the size of a grapefruit, but it is her treatment more than her disease that is making her suffer. Although she sometimes sounds frosty and brittle in the manner of Albee's older battle-axes, she is a person of genuine charm and sensibility and, as played by Chalfant, extraordinary grace. The whole purpose of her existence up to the moment of her death is somehow to preserve this humanity while being pushed, pulled, and prodded like a helpless experimental object. Trying to keep her spirit whole as her body wastes away is the only way she can protect herself against the indignities of medicine. Afflicted by pain and boredom and the slowing down of time ("it hangs ... and yet there is so little of it"), wracked with fevers and chills, subject to perpetual nausea, she continues to find refuge in language, which changes from Latinate constructions to plain Anglo-Saxon in order to accommodate descriptions of her decaying bodily functions.

The play that comes to mind is Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III*, where another amiable character is mangled

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and lacerated by the whips of medicine. Bennett showed that even a royal sovereign is likely to be tortured by well-meaning practitioners. Now Vivian Bearing is seeking among her doctors the touch of human kindness that she gradually realizes she has denied to her own students. All they can tell her is to keep pushing fluids. As one by one her vital organs fail, she is moved from room to room (scraping hospital curtains dramatize the changes in locale) until she ends up in an isolation ward. The one person who treats her like something other than a conduit for tubes and pills is her nurse Susie. In a touching moment, they share a popsicle together, Susie providing her only relief from pain; and it is Susie who reminds the doctors, after Vivian's heart has stopped, that she left strict orders not to be resuscitated.

The final exquisite scene lifts this play from a display of taste and intelligence into something more exalted. Unheeding of Susie's remonstrances, the doctors are trying to bring this "data collector" back to life so that she can continue to serve as a source of research. There is pandemonium in the isolation room as their efforts fail. Suddenly, the dead Vivian rises from her bed, removes the baseball cap that has concealed her baldness, takes off her hospital gown, and in absolute nakedness ascends to her God. It is a little disconcerting that the most powerful moment in this eloquent play is a wordless one. But the emotional wallop of that final image would not have been possible without the language that preceded it. *Villa Villa* and *Wit* approach the theater from entirely different ends of the verbal spectrum. That each succeeds so well in its own distinct way of breaking silence testifies to the infinite variety of dramatic art. •

Doctors, patients, and the end.

The Right to Live

BY SHERWIN B. NULAND

I.

After Jack Kevorkian, Derek Humphry is the most well-known figure in the American movement to legalize physician-assisted suicide. Since publishing *Jean's Way* in 1978, Humphry has been a tireless advocate of an individual's right to choose the path that he calls "self-deliverance," when the burdens of terminal illness have become unbearable. In that book, he described how he obtained pills to help his wife die, after she pleaded with him for a lethal overdose to relieve her of the anguish of advanced breast cancer.

Two years later, Humphry founded the Hemlock Society, whose objective, according to its charter of 1980, "is to promote a climate of public opinion which is tolerant of the right of people who are terminally ill to end their own lives in a planned manner." The charter mentioned a book then in preparation, "providing information about methods and strategies of planned death with dignity," which would be supplied to members upon request.

There would, in fact, be two books. In 1981 the Society published Humphry's *Let Me Die Before I Wake*, subtitled *Hemlock's Book of Self-Deliverance for the Dying*, which contained not only the stories of people who had successfully committed suicide but also the precise drug dosages in which readers might be interested. When the next book, *Final Exit*, appeared in February 1991, it created a sensation, primarily for its chapter entitled "Self-Deliverance via the Plastic Bag," in which a detailed description is provided of the recommended way of inserting one's head into such a lethal envelope, "firmly tied around the neck with either a large rubber band or a ribbon," after having taken a sufficient number of pills to induce unconsciousness. The instructions came without a guarantee, but Humphry could predict satisfaction: "In the vast majority of cases, the drugs work and in any time between 20 minutes and an hour the person is dead. Sometimes it is longer, say two hours, but that is exceptional." The reader could only presume that plenty of research had been done and the follow-up of cases was thorough.

Freedom to Die:
People, Politics and the
Right-to-Die Movement
by Derek Humphry and Mary Clement
(St. Martin's Press, 388 pp., $24.95)

Notoriety was not immediate. Sales were only in the tens of thousands for the first five months, until a prominent article in *The Wall Street Journal* suddenly brought the book to wide public attention. In a very short time, *Final Exit* began an 18-week sojourn on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Eventually it sold over a million copies. The profits of the Hemlock Society were so large that the organization was able to begin donating what would eventually amount to almost a million dollars to support ballot initiatives to legalize assisted dying in California, Washington, and Oregon.

All of this is described in Humphry's new book. What does not find its way into *Freedom to Die* is a description of the backlash. For many people had been deeply offended by the lurid contents of *Final Exit*, and shocked that it had been published. Questions were raised about the meaning of its wide sales, and what they denoted about American society. The popularity of a book that details the technique of suicide by self-asphyxiation could hardly be attributable to the existence of a large corps of terminally sick readers who plan to use it for the purpose that was intended by its author.

Morbid interest certainly played a part, but for some purchasers there was another motivation. In November 1993, a group of researchers from Cornell University Medical College and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of New York reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that they had compared the number of asphyxiations by plastic bag in New York City during the twelve-month periods prior to and following the publication of *Final Exit*. The totals had gone from eight to 33, an increase of 313 percent. A copy of the volume was found at the scene of nine of the 33 suicides, and in another case the note left for survivors was nearly the verbatim text of the model to be found on pages 88–89 of the book.

But there was worse. In most of those 15 cases in which it could be established with some confidence that the victim had been exposed to *Final Exit*, there was no evidence of terminal disease. In fact, autopsy revealed no disease of any kind in six cases, and chronic or asymptomatic pathology in seven others. The book had simply been used as a suicide manual. As the authors pointed out, 95 per-

SHERWIN B. NULAND is Clinical Professor of Surgery at Yale University and the author of *How We Die* and *The Wisdom of the Body* (Knopf).

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cent of all people who commit suicide have a serious mental illness.

Later, in a paper published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, several of the same researchers found the figures nationwide to have gone from 334 to 437 during those periods: an increase in plastic-bag suicides of 31 percent. The senior author, a psychiatrist, pointed out that many suicide attempts are impulsive, ambivalent, and later regretted, and so it is particularly dangerous that such easy access to a dependable way of ending life is readily available just for the buying. He might have added that his disquieting comment is especially applicable to adolescents, some 27 percent of whom think seriously about killing themselves in any twelve-month period, according to a study conducted several years ago by the United States Centers for Disease Control. Eight percent actually attempted it during the survey year.

In his new book Humphry expresses pride about the sales of *Final Exit*. Still, it seems clear that he learned an important lesson from the experience of publishing it. Though he and the Hemlock Society have now gone their separate ways, neither is any longer focused on teaching the technique of "self-deliverance." Both have turned to public awareness and to legislation in order to achieve their goals.

Freedom to Die exemplifies the change in course. Here Humphry has teamed up with the felicitously (or tendentiously) named Mary Clement, a New Yorker who has lived in Arizona since 1996, three years after being admitted to the New York Bar at the age of fifty, and together they have produced a book that is primarily a social history of the American movement to legalize physician-assisted suicide. In certain ways it is a good one. Though it makes Humphry's role appear far more decisive in the overall campaign than it has actually been, the book does provide an accurate and reasonably detailed chronology of the critical events as they unfolded.

It should not be expected, considering the background of the more experienced author, that the descriptions of the combat and the combatants would be even-handed, and in this the reader will not be disappointed. As might be anticipated, everything is viewed through the lens of fervent advocacy, and short shrift is given to the validity of opposing perspectives. Deliberately or not, only a passing mention is to be found of the considerable recent strides made by all manner of health-care professionals toward the improvement of palliative care. It is a development, after all, that robs the authors' argument of some of its urgency.

II.

It is the view of Humphry and Clement that physician-assisted suicide should be legalized. Their book will not convince many readers, and it should not. Even reasonable supporters of the so-called "right to die" will be distracted from the authors' main arguments by their relentless and shrill attacks on organized medicine, much of organized religion, and, it would appear, organized thought in general, or at least informed and critical thought. All the usual heartless villains are paraded along the gauntlet of Humphry's and Clement's abuse: state and federal governments (which "are asserting an authority often associated with a police state"); federal judges (who "are thwarting the will of the people"); doctors (in whom "the majority of the public has lost faith," and who, when faced with managed care, "could no longer boast about how much money they would make, often by relentlessly testing every patient they could, a practice known as 'scoping for dollars'"); the Catholic Church (which, by its opposition to physician-assisted suicide, is attempting to "legalize one religious view and to criminalize others"); the Christian Coalition (so lacking in their own intellectual resources that "the Catholic conservatives are providing the brain-power" for them); and, of course, the much-vilified American Medical Association.

Though many Americans disagree with the positions taken by these groups, Humphry and Clement hardly advance the cause of logical argument by the panorama of charges—some of them questionable or having nothing to do with the case—leveled against the various gray eminences. And a few of their charges go beyond being merely questionable. They are outright distortions of fact. Of these, the most egregious is the following:

> The AMA's conservatism surfaced again when it became apparent that more and more women were choosing medicine as a career. Objecting to women physicians, and especially to women surgeons, the AMA effectively barred the door to medical school through the 1950s, when only a trace of females could be found practicing medicine. The AMA issued the following statement in defense of its position that only men should be trained as physicians: "When a critical case demands independent action, and fearless judgment, man's success depends on his virile courage, which the normal woman does not have, nor is expected to have."

Is it possible that the authors are unaware that the American Medical Association has not had an iota of influence on medical school admissions for at least the past hundred years? They must surely know that there were complex reasons for the relative scarcity of women in medicine until well after the middle of this century, but the policies of organized medicine have not been among them.

Not content with having made a statement with no basis in fact, they go on to support it with the quotation, which they would like the reader to believe is a reflection of recent AMA policy. But many will not be so unwary as to overlook the archaic nature not only of the sentiment but also of the language. Even the punctuation is obsolete. Alerted by these anachronisms, a critical reader might be sufficiently curious to interrupt the flow of the text by consulting the referenced endnote number two for the chapter, located 181 pages away in the bibliography, to find the origin of the quote.

There the reader will discover that it has been taken from page 108 of a book that appeared in 1994 called *Deathright*, by James Hoefler, an associate professor of political science at Dickinson College. *Deathright* is out of print, but its editor very kindly went to the trouble of photocopying his copy and sending it to me. Hoefler clearly points out that he found the quotation in Jack Kevorkian's publication *Prescription: Medicide*, which appeared in 1991, where it is cited as a nineteenth-century statement. But the reader of *Freedom to Die* is obviously meant to think it was made sometime in the past few years. (I am not sure whether the AMA's current president would be amused or angered by this manipulation of the reader in the matter of "virile courage": she is a family physician and a happily married wife and the mother of three children.)

Equally misleading, albeit of far less consequence, are a few words in the chapter dealing with the Karen Ann Quinlan case, which established the principle, in 1976, that life support may be terminated for patients in a permanent vegetative state: "Mary Clement spent two days at a conference with Joe and Julia Quinlan [Karen's parents] in Princeton, New Jersey, in the spring of 1996." Having attended that same conference—having, in fact, delivered its keynote address—I found my curiosity piqued by the construction of that sentence and its implication of a closeness with the Quinlan family. I could not remember having met a Mary Clement at any time during those two eventful days. To refresh my memory, I spoke to Paul Armstrong, the Quinlans' attorney, and to Sally Nunn, a bioethicist who was the conference coordinator. Neither of

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them has ever heard of Mary Clement. Her name does appear among the other 225 registrants who paid a $250 fee to attend, but is unknown to those who were most likely to have indeed been "with" the Quinlans.

Written by one of the founders of the right-to-die movement and a knowledgeable lawyer, *Freedom to Die* might have been a truly important contribution. It is puzzling that its authors should choose to weaken their credibility in these petty ways. A contrived claim to intimacy and the intemperate rekindling of old animosities expose human foibles that should have been resisted, or at least edited out. That neither Humphry and Clement nor their advisors saw fit to do this reveals—among other things—a lack of disciplined thinking; and this is reflected also in the way they make their arguments throughout the text. A certain inability to censor himself has always been characteristic of the writings of Derek Humphry, and his loose interpretation of events does not add to his stature among those who would debate one of the most weighty and complicated issues of our time. The aggressive tenor of his long campaign calls into question the very basis upon which he is committed to the current notions of legalized physician-assisted suicide.

III.

Humphry and Clement argue their case as much from principle as from pragmatism. In these days of the autonomy and the self-determination of the patient, they proclaim, it is outrageous that the dictates of religion, government, and the medical profession still control so much of the decision-making that affects our own bodies.

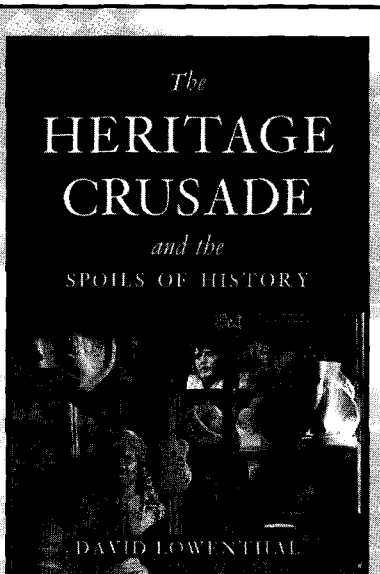
As accurate as Humphry and Clement are in their accounts of the actual events that have occurred, they present their narrative with a fierce determination to have their readers understand these landmarks not as a series of disagreements on a deeply vexed matter, but as a series of attempts by their opponents to subvert the public trust. Each time a piece of legislation supported by the authors is defeated, the failure is portrayed as having occurred because the opposition flooded the campaign with money or influence. Or perhaps the suicide advocates were as yet inexperienced in rallying their forces; but when their cause wins, it is the will of the people.

Indeed, the major argument of the book is to be found in a single sentence: "With national opinion polls consistently showing that between 63 to 78 percent of Americans support the right of terminally ill patients to end their lives, how could the Congress elect, by a combined vote of 497–16, to deny that right?" This is not a very persuasive argument. Religious and ethical controversies are hardly to be settled by polling. Moreover, the opinions of people about the state of medicine do not tell us terribly much about the state of medicine itself. That is an empirical matter.

The only objective case that could be made for the authors' position would be the existence of a medical system so inept or uncaring about managing suffering that physician-assisted suicide is a necessity that must be made available to all terminal patients. Now, nobody can deny the many inadequacies that have existed, and may continue to exist in some situations for at least a few years to come; but knowledgeable readers cannot help but find it ironic that so many of the supporting quotes in *Freedom to Die*'s chapter entitled "Poor End-of-Life Care" are themselves gleaned from the medical literature, and in some instances are statements made by authors opposed to the notions of Humphry and Clement. The reason that these self-critical quotations are so easy to find is that a remarkable amount of attention has been focused in the past two or three years on precisely the problems that assisted suicide is meant to alleviate.

To be sure, had the same medical journals been perused only five or ten years ago, precious few such papers and editorial writings would have been discovered. As someone who has not hesitated to criticize my profession's "poor end-of-life care" to the point of harshness, I have been immensely encouraged by the sea-change that is occurring not only in attitude but also in practice and in education. We have needed the proverbial wake-up call, and it has come. For this we have many people to thank, not least among whom is Derek Humphry himself, and even Jack Kevorkian. The very problems against which they rail are being addressed, and progress is rapid.

This is not to say that it will ever be possible to relieve every patient's suffering so thoroughly that there will no longer be any occasion to consider assisted suicide or active forms of euthanasia, such as lethal injections. But it needs to be remembered that, even now, the expertise exists to deal adequately with the vast majority of situations in which Humphry and Clement—and the voters of Oregon, too—would accede to a request for help in dying. When Dr. Cicely Saunders (in this book, as in *Final Exit*, inexplicably called Cecily Saunders—one of several errors) began the hospice movement some thirty years



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ago, she planted a notion of palliative care that that has taken too long to flourish, but it is finally flourishing. Though many doctors are still without proper knowledge of or training in the remarkably effective methods of comfort care that are now available, the tide has begun to turn.

As recently as 1995, the AMA reported that only five American medical schools had a required course on care of the dying, while the regular curriculum of a mere 26 percent of 7,048 residency programs offered formal training in the medical and legal aspects of end-of-life care. Though no accurate figures are currently available, my own visits to teaching hospitals and schools all over the country confirm what every director of medical education describes: there has been a remarkable burgeoning of such efforts, measurable not only in the number of courses but also in the sheer volume of bedside teaching.

Moreover, several major foundations have turned their attention to research, clinical instruction, and programs to improve the treatment of the terminally ill, the most prominent of which is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, committed to providing close to $40 million in support of a wide variety of these endeavors. The Soros-funded Project on Death in America, started in 1994, has earmarked $20 million over a six-year period to bettering the care of people who are dying; its Faculty Scholars Program identifies outstanding teachers and clinicians dedicated to this kind of work, in order to enhance their effectiveness at the bedside, to encourage their activities as mentors to young physicians and nurses in training, and to develop their capacities as researchers for identifying new models of care. The pool of qualified applicants for all of these programs continues to rise. And the number of certified hospices grows every year, too. It has gone from 31 in 1984 to 2,296 in 1998, each of them staffed with dedicated nurses and medical specialists. No longer is there a dearth of clinicians devoted to providing comfort and palliation for those who suffer the anguish and the indignities of a killing disease.

Humphry and Clement's assertion that "there is virtually no training in pain management or palliative care" might have been accurate as recently as a few years ago, but it is true no longer. That they persist in making this claim demonstrates not only a willingness to misrepresent the facts, but also a contradiction in their book. For elsewhere they admit that "pain management is moving into medical education," and that "there is every reason to hope that with time, the obstacles to a peaceful death will gradually disappear." The time is much shorter than they would have their readers believe. In the hands of the already-large number of physicians skilled in palliative care, the obstacles are few.

The same medical profession that so angers Humphry has taken note of his activities, and is applying its considerable resources to the task of making his thin and ugly solutions, whether plastic bags or inadequately safeguarded legislation, obsolete. To ignore the changed attitude of the leaders of medical thought is to do a disservice to the many dreadfully sick people who would choose to live rather than "self-deliver," were they only to realize that the means are increasingly becoming available to them. Instead of merely watching the proponents of assisted-suicide laws pound the pavements convincing people to vote their way in surveys, it behooves the medical profession to get the word out that things are already much better than the sowers of panic would have the American people believe.

IV.

The major strengths of Humphry and Clement's book are to be found in its chapters that go into considerable detail about the Oregon Death with Dignity Act of October 1997 and the Supreme Court decision of June 1997 overthrowing the Second and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals verdicts declaring, in effect, that states may not make laws prohibiting assisted suicide. These sections are clearly and soberly written, and they provide a thoroughly understandable commentary on those events for the many readers who have been confused by the welter of arguments, and the subtle variations in opinion of the various justices, not to mention the shadings of differing interpretations of the constitutional issues involved. Not only is the background of the Oregon law explained, but its implementation in practice is clarified as well. The law itself appears in an appendix.

That is to say, it appears with its warts exposed to full view. Humphry and Clement write approvingly of the Oregon law as "a generic blueprint of how different state laws will probably operate." If so, woe is us. Oregon has legalized some of the notions that many authoritative proponents of physician-assisted suicide have become convinced are dangerous. Their appearance in the law's text is a virtual declaration that the incline of the so-called "slippery slope" has already become much steeper than realized, and greasier, too. Three such provisions deserve special attention.

The first is based on the peculiar notion that the patient's interests will be insured by insisting that the attending physician call in a consultant to confirm the diagnosis of terminal disease and verify that an informed, voluntary decision is being made by a competent person. While the competence of the patient is demanded, the Oregon law has nothing to say about the competence of the consultant. How will she be chosen? Is she sufficiently knowledgeable about the disease for which the patient has undergone treatment that she is qualified to judge whether further care, either palliative or therapeutic, might effectively relieve suffering? Or is she a simply a like-minded colleague who will accept the attending doctor's assurance that all avenues have been explored?

The longstanding tradition of medical consultation demands not only that the consultant be an expert who can verify a diagnosis, but also that he or she must be able to suggest further options of care that may have been overlooked by the patient's own doctor. And why only a single consultant, especially one whose qualifications are not specified in the legislation? Should it not be demanded that the second physician be a certified specialist in the requesting patient's disease? And why not a third consultation, by a physician with considerable experience in palliative care?

Regardless of recent increased awareness and training, there are still plenty of doctors not sufficiently knowledgeable about the effective comfort methods now available. We recognize specialization in all other areas of illness, and we call in such experts routinely. Should there not be some provision, at this momentous point in the course of an illness, that an authority on palliative care must confirm that there is indeed no way in which the anguish of a terminal patient can be relieved? The great advances made in the past few years assure that such physicians are readily available to every patient, whether hospitalized or at home. With the best of intentions, then, the Oregon legislature has been naïve. It permits death by rubber stamp.

The inadequacy of the provision about a second opinion reflects yet another much-discussed concern, which is the patient's state of mind. Sadness and depression are common accompaniments of terminal disease, but there is depression and there is depression. The Oregon law leaves the decision about whether to seek psychiatric evaluation to the attending physician and his hand-picked consultant. Even Humphry and Clement acknowledge that treatable clinical depression can be difficult to detect. And yet they and the Oregon legislators

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are perfectly content to have a psychiatrist or a psychologist see their patient only if, for example, a surgeon and a general internist are sufficiently perceptive to identify the externally observable evidence of its existence. Even a brief period of treatment in such situations will often result in a realization by the patient that his wish to die has been the product of thought processes clouded by morbid obsessions. Yet the authors are adamantly opposed to mandatory mental-health evaluation, on the incomprehensible basis that it represents "a reduction in individual freedoms."

No Oregonian who requests physician-assisted suicide, moreover, is required to notify any next of kin. Humphry and Clement conspicuously do not comment on this particular provision, and it is easy to see why. They must certainly realize that autonomy and self-determination go just so far. Elsewhere in the book, in fact, they say that assisted death is "a matter to be decided with the family and with the patient's conscience"—but this is certainly a contradiction of the legislation that they so avidly support. Surely a decision to die must be defensible to those who love us, to those whose lives would be unalterably affected by it. It must be made not only with their consent but with their approval too, which is quite another thing. It is not a matter to decide with medical assent alone. No compassionate physician should allow it to be done without a family's support.

These three objections to the Oregon law are only a few of the issues that make up the aforementioned slippery slope. Some of the others have to do with the concern that many aged, enfeebled, or chronically ill people will feel pressured by a "duty to die," in order to conserve family and national resources, or to relieve others of the stresses of caring for them. Just a year ago Derek Humphry and I were speakers at a symposium organized by students at the Harvard Medical School, during which a young woman seated in a wheelchair spoke movingly about widespread fears among the disabled. But *Freedom to Die* trivializes such legitimate concerns with a dismissive remark: "Spokespersons for the disabled always claim that they represent everyone who is handicapped physically and mentally."

And yet, for unfathomable reasons, Humphry and Clement have chosen to include a chapter in their book entitled "The Unspoken Argument," in which they address the issue of the right to die as a method of cost containment. Having in the previous 309 pages reiterated again and again their position that physician-assisted suicide is only for the suffering terminally ill, they then proceed to provide a wide variety of statistics explaining why other scenarios for its utilization should be considered:

> Like it or not, the connections between the right-to-die and the cost, value, and allocation of health care resources are part of the political debate, albeit frequently unspoken.... [T]he right-to-die movement is gaining momentum in response to a legitimate societal problem—the emotional, physical, and economic toll of the dying experience on not only government, employers, hospitals, and insurance companies, but on families as well.

Such a statement exemplifies economicism of the meanest sort; but the authors of *Freedom to Die* believe that this is as it should be. The implications of their position are clear: the solution provided by these two advocates of the rights of the terminally ill is that society could save a lot of money and resources by relaxing its restrictions on assisted suicide.

Only last week, indeed, I was told by the director of the Connecticut Hospice, America's first such facility, that the number of patients in hospices around the country has risen significantly since the Oregon law was passed. Her explanation for this development was that many terminally ill patients are afraid of what effect the laws may have on those who care for them in hospitals or at home. They feel safer in a hospice, where no form of euthanasia, no matter how well-intentioned, is possible.

Humphry and Clement's projections are simply wrong. A recent analysis published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* indicated that the most reasonable estimate of the cost savings that would result from such legalization is less than 0.07 percent of total health expenditures for the entire nation. For Humphry and Clement, however, the duty to die should take its place on the slippery slope, giving the lie to all the authors' noble sentiments and ardent concerns about the undue influences that others may exert on the sick.

V.

All of this brings us to the Oath of Hippocrates, and the Hippocratic philosophy that nothing should be more important to the physician than the welfare of his patient. No commentator on physician-assisted suicide seems to feel that his text is complete unless he invokes Hippocrates, and our present authors are hardly exceptions.

Although Derek Humphry and Mary

Pulliam

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Clement would have their readers think otherwise, almost half of American medical school graduations each year include a recitation of the Hippocratic Oath or one of its variations. The assertion by Humphry and Clement that "physicians who have actually taken it are few and far between" is false. A survey published in 1991 in *Academic Medicine* indicates that every one of our nation's 124 schools administers some form of professional oath to its newly minted doctors.

"I swear by Apollo the physician, and Aesculapius, Hygeia, and Panacea, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this covenant": it is a grand tradition that began on the Greek island of Cos some 2,300 years ago. The frequency of oath-taking has waxed and waned over the many centuries since it was begun by the Hippocratic physicians, but it was never higher than it has become in recent decades. To the vast majority of today's doctors, the sense of personal responsibility for those who come to be healed is very much alive, and not in danger of being assisted to its suicide. The Oath is its expression.

I mention this not only to point out one of the serious misapprehensions of this book. I bring it up also because the Oath does seem always to loom large in discussions of our present dilemma about euthanasia and assisted suicide. So much has been said about it, in fact, that nonmedical readers may have the impression that it is a form of holy writ; that a graduating doctor who recites it is forever bound by its every phrase, and not doing so signifies a moral laxity either in one's medical training or oneself. Even Humphry and Clement know that this is not so. But they go further. In stating that "the Oath has little relevance today," they reveal a basic misunderstanding of its importance in defining just what the practice of medicine is all about.

When the two authors erroneously write that "the profession, which prides itself on the Oath, does not require its members to take it," they are attempting to support their contention that its proscription against helping a patient to his death is "outdated," and therefore no longer valid. They decry the way in which medical groups trot out its sonorous phrases when seeking grounds on which to campaign against physician-assisted suicide, though it is common knowledge (or so they state) that the ancient pledge has no claim on the ethics of a modern physician. Yet Humphry and Clement are sorrily misinformed.

The Oath contains a series of specific injunctions written more than two millennia ago by members of a society immensely different from our own. Who can doubt that there may not be universal agreement that each one of them should be understood as necessarily binding on the behavior of physicians today? That was true even in the era when the Oath was written. And yet young doctors continue to recite the original statement, or one of its variants, at what must generally be agreed is the most moving moment of the medical commencement proceedings. I have seen the eyes of hardened clinicians fill with tears during the oath-taking, and parents become swept up in the emotion of seeing their sons and daughters take part in the inspiring ceremony. Humphry and Clement to the contrary, the Hippocratic Oath will always have relevance, no matter how some of the words themselves have been interpreted to suit different circumstances and different periods.

The Oath is a symbolic declaration linking all physicians of all times in the common understanding that henceforth their lives are to be consecrated to the care of the sick. In a slick and materialistic era such as our own, talk of consecration may seem melodramatic to some. But others will recognize the power of feeling that such a sentiment arouses in a young physician. Many doctors are sustained for decades by that feeling of hallowed duty, amid the vicissitudes of the difficult and sometimes discouraging sequence of illness-experiences that we call a career. The power of tradition is one of the factors that bind us together not only as a profession, but also as a calling. It signifies that a shared moral code exists, from which none of us is exempt. Though we may differ about some of its elements, the existence of such a code pervades and enriches the atmosphere in which we care for our patients.

It is specifically that atmosphere which must be understood by those who would legislate or pronounce upon the validity of a doctor's role in assisting a man or

Last Afternoon in Athens

The call at the cluttered apartment
of the old friend who's still living;

the stroll past the shuttered house
of the other old friend who's dead;

both visits done, it's all downhill from here
(stairs for me and banisters for you)

from the mountain to the heart of town
where to kill time before the sun goes down

we drop in on an earthly paradise—
the National Garden. Here a crone

feeding hordes of cats shrieks *Go away!*
Leave them alone! They're hungry—let them eat!

Obediently we sink into a seat
from whose respectful distance we can watch

tigers, tabbies, tortoise shells, black, white,
tiny, lordly, dive and yawn

and stretch in striped sunlight.
We neither talk nor look away

from this teeming nursery. Dusty leaves,
the paths, the bench, the stones

look soiled and ancient, glazed with knowing sun.
Still speechless, we stand up in unison.

Rachel Hadas

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woman to die. A first step in such an understanding is to attend carefully to the words—and more importantly, to the sense—of the Oath. Having defined his debt to his teachers and to those who will succeed him, the Greek physician described a series of obligations he was constrained to fulfill in order to carry out his primary duty, which is defined as follows: "In whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick." A similar statement appears elsewhere in the Oath as well, and for good reason: the benefit of the sick is the essence of the moral contract that binds the doctor to those who come to him for help. It is the foundation of the bond that we have come to call the doctor-patient relationship. We continue to have our graduating medical students declare the ancient words so that they may recognize and attest that the highest value of the medical profession is the sanctity of that relationship.

The bond between an individual physician and an individual patient is the basis of the healer's art. The Hippocratic physician committed himself to each sick person entrusted to his care—not that person's family, not his community, and not some hypothetical future patient. The greatest good was quite simply "the benefit of the sick." For almost two and a half millennia, the benefit of that one person was understood to be the ground upon which every medical decision was made, whether in prescribing a dietary change or easing a patient's suffering at the end of life.

The relationship between a doctor and a patient goes beyond mere privacy and confidentiality. At its finest, it takes the form of a kind of professional intimacy, based on the inherent trust that neither participant will take advantage of it for his own gain. And so those who mislead themselves and their readers by spreading the assertion that "the Oath has little relevance today" or that it is "outdated" had better think twice.

We interpret and reinterpret the Bible, the Constitution, and other significant documents of our civilization, but few of us would declare such writings to be irrelevant because they can be understood in differing ways. Such works form the core of our culture, and tell us the nature of our values. So it is with the Hippocratic Oath. At a time when the basic values of medicine are under attack on so many fronts, it is no wonder that the profession has turned back to the first statement of the ethical structure of its practices, and asked all of its acolytes to begin their careers by pledging to uphold it.

The portions of the Oath that most beg for interpretation these days are those that may be construed to concern themselves with the notion of physician-assisted suicide, and it is fair to turn to them in an attempt to find guidance. There are two Hippocratic statements that bear on the issue, and they would appear to be at odds with each other. The one most quoted is, "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel." For strict adherents to the letter of the pledge, this would seem to rule out any possibility of injecting or prescribing the means of death to terminally ill patients who ask for it. And yet we know that suicide was an accepted form of dealing with physical and emotional suffering during the classical period, and also that doctors were often the source when poisons were required.

Of course, it is probable—as some historians have pointed out—that the Oath was taken only by a relatively small sect of the many sorts of healers of the day, which would explain the general willingness to provide what was necessary. But I believe that the great pledge, like so many of the Hippocratic writings, and like the sacred texts of great religions, is internally contradictory. In the case of the prohibition against aiding in death, moreover, the contradiction may be deliberate.

The contradiction takes a form that invites conjecture. The paragraph immediately prior to the one about deadly medicine states, "I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous." It takes no intense scrutiny of the document's full text to recognize that the basic theme pervading it is "the benefit of the patient." This is precisely why the Oath and its present-day derivatives are the bedrock articulations of the doctor-patient relationship. It is impossible to believe that in the Greek world there were not occasions aplenty where the benefit of the patient superseded the injunction against deadly medicines. In spite of all the advances recently made in the area of palliative care, and the diligent attention finally being paid to it by a medical profession that has suddenly realized its own deficiencies in the management of terminal illness, there are still such occasions. They are much more rare than Derek Humphry and Mary Clement seem willing to acknowledge, but they exist. They may occur only a few times in any doctor's experience, but they must be dealt with, lest the honored tradition of medicine become as "outdated" as some would like to think.

More than occasionally, a physician encounters a situation in which his efforts to cure disease are directly in conflict with his obligation to relieve the suffering of his patient. Usually the second is accomplished by the first; but when there is no cure, attention must be turned to palliation. Almost always nowadays, it is possible to relieve suffering if the physician is only willing to turn his whole attention to its relief, and ask for help from others when necessary.

Still, in very unusual circumstances—I would estimate not more than a few times in a long career, if my own experience is a guide—it will prove impossible to relieve the anguish that often accompanies the end of life, whether physical or emotional. At such a time, one must remember not only the spirit of the Hippocratic Oath, but even certain of its words, which transcend society and culture. Thus I am bound as a physician by every moral code I know to do only what is "for the benefit of my patient." If the fully informed person whose suffering I cannot relieve repeatedly asks that I aid him in his determination to end his life, whether by pill or injection, I am obliged to do so. A tolerant society should allow it.

Were this the case, I would not hesitate to follow the path that my conscience prescribes, as I have followed it on several occasions in the past. Yet there are things I know today that were unclear to me then. In justice to my patient, and consistent with my duty to preserve life whenever possible, I must be absolutely sure that certain safeguards have been fulfilled. All efforts must be exhausted to assure myself of the state of his disease and his mental capacity. I must discuss every aspect of the decision not only with him but with his family too, to prepare them for their participation in the discussion. I would suggest spiritual counseling, even for those without formal faith. And I would take a further step: having obtained all appropriate consultations, I would present the situation to a group of men and women whose sagacity I respect, whether such a forum consists of a standing committee under the jurisdiction of my hospital or is convened for this particular grim case.

And even then, even then, I would not allow my patient to embark on his final journey alone. I would be with him to the last heartbeat. There are matters between a doctor and those who entrust themselves to his care that those for whom death is merely a "right" seem not to understand. •

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The Spirit of '98

By R. F. Foster

Citizen Lord: The Life of Edward Fitzgerald, Irish Revolutionary by Stella Tillyard

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 337 pp., $30)

Ezra Pound, who had a way of being surprisingly right as well as spectacularly wrong, once remarked that the only real artistic sin was doing something again that somebody else had already done better. This should ring in the ears of anyone trying to write the biography of a glamorous figure about whom little now remains to be discovered. For there are not many alternative routes to prospect. One option is to claim that previous biographers, while working from the same sources, have got it all wrong. Another is to transpose the subject into a new historiographical perspective, preferably a fashionable one. And another is to infuse a new interpretation, if not new material, with the speculation and the seductive prism of fiction. Make a novel of it!

Stella Tillyard adroitly resorts to all three stratagems for the purpose of illuminating the life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the duke's son who became entranced by the ideas (and some of the personnel) of the French Revolution, and put himself rather ineptly at the head of the Irish rebellion of 1798 (or part of it). That "Rising" against British rule, reliant on French aid, did not work out as planned, though it convulsed parts of the country and its casualties were estimated at 30,000. It was intended by its leaders to be a nationally coordinated revolution of French-inspired egalitarians; but bad planning, unreliable allies, and draconian state repression before the event meant that revolutionary activity, while violent, was only episodically effective—notably in counties Wexford and Wicklow. What came quickly to the fore, moreover, was not French secularism, but ancient and sectarian hatred.

The reaction of a British government at war with France was violent and bloody, and the episode helped to ensure the extinction of the Dublin parliament, a body which, until the panic of the mid-1790s, had been engaged in a gradual and uneven process of reforming itself. Instead, the ensuing Act of Union in 1801 forged Ireland and Britain into an uncomfortable political unit for the next hundred and twenty years. As for Fitzgerald, he perished in prison from wounds incurred while resisting arrest, and entered the pantheon of those who "died for Ireland."

How far does this always readable and sometimes racy book escape Pound's warning, and how much light is actually cast? Tillyard is an intelligent writer, who rightly considers that Fitzgerald's life is worthy of introducing to a new audience. Thus the first route is opened up: in Tillyard's view, the previous biographers got it wrong. Early nineteenth-century romantics such as Tom Moore, who wrote the first *Life*, certainly put Fitzgerald squarely in the tradition of the noble, self-sacrificial, deluded hero-victim. He was apparently born, in 1763, to the purple, with royal connections through his mother's family as well as Irish-aristocratic Geraldine blood from his father. In many ways, indeed, he parallels well-born French revolutionaries of the age; and he married a supposed daughter of "Philippe Egalité," the renegade Duc d'Orleans. He grew up among liberal Whiggish political opinions, and radical notions of educational and social reorganization; he traveled in America and Canada, and hobnobbed with radicals in London. But Fitzgerald saw America as a British army officer in the Revolutionary War, and his radical English friends were followers of Charles James Fox, whose politics were more complicated and ambivalent than is sometimes realized in Tillyard's pages: their admiration for French egalitarianism was strictly limited by their Whiggish conditioning, and so was their sympathy for Ireland. Real "radicalism" was located at a very different social level of contemporary England.

Back in Ireland, which he knew rather better, the draconian measures by which the British government tried to squelch radical political societies in Ireland in the 1790s drove Lord Edward to the left, eventually embracing revolution rather than reform. The same applied to many of the Irish middle class (contrary to textbook generalizations, it did exist as a *couche sociale*), a few of the gentry, but hardly any other "aristocrats." One of them, Arthur O'Connor, seems to have been a kind of revolutionary tutor to Fitzgerald, and his ideas deserve closer attention than they can receive here.

Still, how far Fitzgerald really understood the implications of those whose company he kept is murky. It is clear that he had little time for more moderate reform politics, of the sort that had brought partial liberation for the exclusively Protestant Irish parliament in 1782. One does not learn much from his experience about the complex cross-currents of the "Volunteering" movement in the ensuing period—and his story illuminates the French-inspired United Irishmen movement, which sprang up in the early 1790s, much less than one might expect.

Tillyard has been to the right sources, and followed brilliant recent treatments by scholars such as Marianne Elliott and Nancy Curtin. One can imagine how a reinterpretation of Fitzgerald, in the light of their painstaking reconstructions, might counter previous treatments that depicted him as a thoughtless romantic, out of his depth. But unfortunately nothing in the material used or quoted by Tillyard (her book is maddeningly free of footnotes or citations) realigns her hero meaningfully into the intellectual atmosphere of coffee-house debates or Franco-Irish radicalism; and it remains as hard as ever to get away from the damning judgment given by his colleague Wolfe Tone's widow, that the noble lord was "playing at revolution" and got carried away.

In the end, Fitzgerald looks much as he has always done. Unless, that is, the biographer adverts to the second option, and swings the searchlight to another angle. Tillyard chooses, sharply enough, to concentrate on "intimate life." This is where she scored her previous success, with a book called *Aristocrats*, dealing with the lives of three daughters of the Duke of Richmond: Lord Edward Fitzgerald's mother, the Duchess of Leinster, and her sisters. They were strong-minded, fashionable, well-connected women who could afford to flout a good deal of "respectable" opinion and live their lives with a certain flair and freedom, marrying dull men and then more or less doing what they wanted. They also wrote about it at length. In her previous work, Tillyard used the large-scale correspondence of the Lennox sisters, copiously edited and published forty-odd years ago by Brian Fitzgerald, and a staple for general histories of "Georgian Ireland"; but the material was given

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a linguistic turn for the 1990s, menstruation entering the picture along with menus, and Lévi-Strauss illuminating the levees. The result was widely applauded.

Tillyard knows this family. She is extremely good on the Duchess, a mother from a Tennessee Williams nightmare; the mixture of sentimentality and ruthlessness in personal relations rings psychologically true. (Might her youngest son, to whom she wrote like a lover, and who replied in kind, have eventually embraced revolution as a means of escape?) The pompous silliness of Lord Edward's elder brother's ducal life at his great Kildare *palazzo* is also sharply delineated. Houses, rooms, gardens are vividly sketched. The sexual freedom allowed to themselves by the Fitzgerald circle is startlingly modern: Lord Edward's doomed love affair with the wife of the playwright Sheridan, and the fate of their tragically short-lived child, have been fully enough documented to provide an arresting episode here, which incidentally helps to establish the character of the hero.

Much the best part of the book concerns Fitzgerald's education: the adaptation of Rousseau's ideas by the young Fitzgeralds' Scottish tutor William Ogilvie, whom their mother took as her lover and eventually—in the best egalitarian spirit—married. The connections between a childhood in the family's summer villa on Dublin Bay, learning about natural freedoms and social contracts, and the later observations of life among American Indians and on the Canadian frontier, are certainly thought-provoking. And the notion of Lord Edward as a kind of Rousseauan template, the perfect man of sensibility, is projected forward to his passionate interest in gardening as a conscious metaphor not only for social egalitarianism but also for social remodeling. (He and his wife Pamela even abandoned their child, in a true Rousseauan gesture, though the recipient was the omnivorous Duchess rather than the foundling hospital.)

It might be pointed out that, though they shared the benefits of the Ogilvie regime, Edward's brother William grew up as stuffy a duke as any conservative could wish; and his brother Robert assessed the French Revolution both cynically and presciently. Still, the image of Edward as *Emile* carries conviction. Certainly Tillyard's hero was not only naïve—as testified to by most of his acquaintance, even his adoring sister—but also not very bright.

The other plank on which this second edifice of construction rests is less successful. That plank is Tony Small. He was a black servant whom Lord Edward acquired during his American sojourn, a runaway slave who looked after his future master *in extremis* after the Battle of Eutaw Springs and was duly brought back to Ireland. "My black," "the faithful Tony," was apparently always treated well by his master; he is mentioned from time to time in his many gushing letters; and he stayed by him till the end. A portrait of servant, pony, and dog (deconstructed at length by Tillyard) shows him carefully positioned in center canvas: he is the noble savage to Lord Edward's egalitarian *philosophe*. Or so Tillyard has it, and it is an arresting thought.

Yet it is less convincing to find Tony wheeled on stage at every turn: his thoughts speculated about (or actually retailed), his actions detailed, his relationship with Fitzgerald elevated to a central trope of the story. The saga of Lord Edward Fitzgerald is really not significantly about his relation to Tony Small. And when we read that "Lord Edward's long-lashed eyes followed Tony and seemed to offer him a trust beyond that usually given to a servant or to a slave," we might be excused for wondering if there were earthier reasons for bringing him back and keeping him close by, though speculation does not extend that far, for better or worse.

It is easy to tire of Tony. He "could not know what his master thought of him," we are told, and that seems fair enough; but we are also told, at great length, what he thought of his master. Initially "he had no idea that he would soon be bound to his master by ... the force of love itself." He "studied" him closely, "seeing how he liked to lounge about in the morning reading and talking to the officers and men," noticing his "boisterous and boyish high spirits." Stationed at Woolwich, "where he kept company with soldiers and local prostitutes, Lord Edward turned to Tony for companionship." Indeed, the black servant "had begun to be a mainstay in difficult times." When they visit Nova Scotia in 1788, the sights, the smells, and the sounds of the colony are described as they are experienced by Tony; his worries as his master heads into ever more radical courses are also faithfully retailed. The book even ends with Tony.

Here again one longs for citation and reference. For these passages seem to retail a closely recorded segment of black consciousness in the late eighteenth century by a uniquely "privileged observer." This standpoint—history as seen from below, or from outside, by the Other—is a fashionable one; but the vivid details need to be established and verified. Or are these details, alternatively, evidence of the third option mentioned above, which has several recent precedents: a

"Do not tell a lie, and whatever you hate do not do it." Thus Jesus answered requests for directions on how to pray, fast, and give alms. Not lying trumps all displays of religion! Truth is never without uncertainty, but a lie is always known to be such by the liar. This is one of 113 sayings of Jesus that have a valid claim to authenticity, not redacted as are those found in the Bible; so concludes Jack Hannah in analyzing the recently discovered ancient Thomas document. A wholly new vista opens upon the historical Jesus, showing that his ethics and theology differed from that developed by his disciples. All pertinent texts and commentary are provided.

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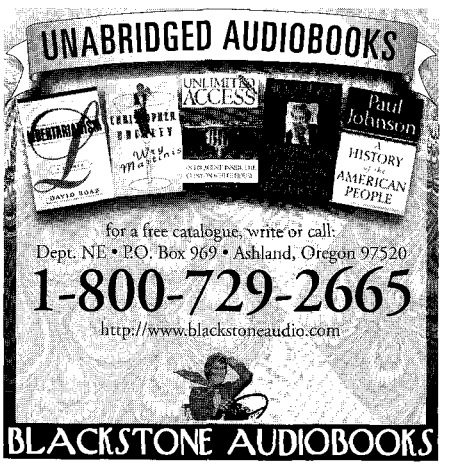

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deliberate venture into fictionalization?

Byron said that Fitzgerald's life should have been a novel. Indeed, the useful trade journal *Books Ireland* announced Tillyard's life of Fitzgerald under "forthcoming novels," as "second in a trilogy of historical fiction after *Aristocrats*." But it is not a novel. *Citizen Lord* is an essay in accessible historical biography, by a clever writer determined and able to write a readable book. It is a worthwhile intention; but this is a tricky genre, and the risks do not always pay off.

Surely the fictionalized I-was-there prologue (Tony again!) and first chapter are written with the privilege of the novelist's authority.

> The Earl glanced out of the window with an impatient anticipation of annoyance, noticing the brambles revealed by the wintry bareness of his park and the slovenly attitude of his gatekeeper leaning on a long, gnarled stick. But he turned back to look at his wife with an expectation of pleasure, contemplating her auburn beauty with as much satisfaction as he had done on the day he had married her sixteen years before.... the sight of her small, exquisite hand reaching up to slide down the glass window as they turned the last corner to the front of their house filled him with pride and desire.

All this a historian cannot know. Whether Tillyard's book is a "true novel" remains, of course, impossible to establish; but there are plenty of recent cod-philosophical rationalizations for elevating imagination and intuition above archival toil in order to make people read history. It is finally unclear in what direction Tillyard has decided to employ her talents.

It should also be pointed out that this book appears astutely in the bicentenary year of the Rising of 1798, and as such it takes its place in a large-scale battery of works designed to present that event in terms comprehensible (and welcome) to the sensibilities of 1998. Irish politicians and government-funded itinerant lecturers on history have been pounding populist platforms on both sides of the Atlantic since the beginning of this year, arguing that 1798 saw the coming together of Protestant and Catholic in a truly modernizing, secular-minded, Enlightenment initiative. This should have thrown off the shackles of the past along with the sectarian animosities created by the British, linked Ireland to the European continent where its true interests lay, and initiated a peace process which would have brought a new millennium. But alas, the imperialist oppressor again fomented unreal differences between the inhabitants of the island, and imposed division in order to rule.

Sound familiar? It ought to. To be sure, anything that encourages peace in Northern Ireland in 1998 should be regarded favorably; but some of the *bien-pensant* misreading of 1798 is hard for a historian to stomach. The idealism, the passion, and the enthusiasm of the principals is enduringly inspiring, and the brutality, the ignorance, and the paranoia of the wartime British government, especially where Irish radicalism was concerned, is a fact of history. Yet the attitude, say, of Presbyterian radicalism toward its Catholic allies is much less sunny than the New Look postulates. The modernizing, revolutionary, egalitarian, French spirit was certainly not as widespread as some would nowadays like to think; and the intercommunal animosity unleashed in the most concentrated episode of violence in Irish history, which carried away 30,000 people on a tide of blood, is also a part of the story, along with French-inspired utopianism and government atrocities.

While working on her book, Tillyard realized that she was "part of a wider historical project"—meaning, I think, the enterprise of reinterpreting 1798 for 1998. While she generally avoids this danger, some of her interpretation does convey a certain present-mindedness (along with her taste for analyzing paintings and decoding the significance of gardens). Thus sectarianism is roundly blamed on "spies and informers," and the idea of a Catholic uprising, prevalent in many areas, goes unmentioned. The conclusion of Tillyard's book defines the period of the Union (effectively 1800–1921) as "an endless and bloody embrace" between the two countries, which is going it a bit. It was not endless, and the blood-spilling was episodic and mostly concentrated at the beginning and end of the period. There is much still to be established about the unspoken histories of the Irish nineteenth century.

The writing of fiction, using historical sources, is certainly one way to achieve understanding, and the Irish experience provides some distinguished recent examples (such as the work of Thomas Flanagan, especially *The Tenants of Time*, his exemplary novel about Fenianism, or Peter Quinn's *Banished Children of Eve*). If *Citizen Lord* is indeed the second part of a trilogy that began with *Aristocrats*, it might be wise to establish the genre of the third installment from the outset. Giving imagination full rein, and producing a counter-factual fantasy set in Ireland as a Napoleonic fiefdom after a successful '98, could be an interesting and sobering approach with which to begin.

R.F. FOSTER is Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford University.

The Unrealist

BY DONALD FANGER

The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol translated and annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky

(Pantheon, 435 pp., $30)

Nikolai Gogol was nineteenth-century Russia's greatest writer of prose. Not its greatest prose writer: Dostoyevsky (who launched his career by rewriting Gogol's most famous story), as well as Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, and others, framed complexities that have no counterpart in their odd predecessor, and they wrote on a scale that dwarfed his. They explored ideas; he, at best, adumbrated them. They used a medium that Gogol, in a brief eleven years, had fashioned and tuned to produce effects never before seen in Russian. Their writing gives the impression of being three-dimensional, whereas Gogol's writing, as Nabokov claimed, "is four-dimensional, at least."

Recognition of Gogol's qualities may have come only in the twentieth century, but he did not have to wait for fame. It came to him in 1831, when he was 22, with his first collection of stories, *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*. Four years later, the young critic Belinsky awarded him the position allegedly vacated by Pushkin, calling him "the head of Russian literature." By 1842, when the first volume of his eagerly awaited novel *Dead Souls* appeared, there were grounds for his claim that the eyes of all Russia were on him.

Shifty and elusive by nature, Gogol

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could not bear the scrutiny—all the more so since he himself had encouraged the public to expect something unprecedentedly great, something Dantesque, in the remaining two volumes of that work. He lived for another ten years, but he was to publish no further fiction. Self-consciousness undid him. His earlier writings, he claimed, had been produced unreflectively; now that he found himself answerable—to Russia, to God, to posterity—the questions with which he had mockingly ended his great story "The Nose" took on a new and paralyzing sense:

> But what is strangest, what is most incomprehensible of all is how authors can choose such subjects.... I confess, that is utterly inconceivable, it is simply ... no, no, I utterly fail to understand. In the first place, there is decidedly no benefit to the fatherland; in the second place ... but in the second place there is also no benefit. I simply do not know what it....

Levity and gravity mix in Gogol, mysteriously and unaccountably. Of the thirteen stories assembled here, eight show this in exemplary fashion. And even the inferior five have their charms. They make clear by contrast the idiosyncratic perfection of the others. "St. John's Eve," the tale of a murderous, love-inspired bargain with the devil, contains this striking anticipation of Saturday morning television in America:

> The witch stamped her foot: blue flame burst from the ground; its whole inside lit up and looked as if it were molded from crystal; and everything under the ground became visible as in the palm of your hand. Gold coins, precious stones, in chests, in cauldrons, were heaped up right under the place where they stood. His eyes glowed ... his mind darkened.... As if insane, he seized the knife and innocent blood spurted into his eyes.... A devilish guffawing thundered on all sides. Hideous monsters leaped before him in throngs. The witch, clutching the beheaded corpse, drank its blood like a wolf.... Everything whirled in his head! Summoning all his strength, he broke into a run. Everything before him was covered with red. The trees, bathed in blood, seemed to burn and groan. The sky, red hot, was trembling.... Fiery spots, like lightning, came to his eyes. Exhausted, he ran inside his hut and collapsed as if he had been mowed down. A dead sleep came over him.

In the farcical "The Night Before Christmas," which opens with the devil stealing the moon from the sky, a pious blacksmith forces the devil to fly him to St. Petersburg on an errand for his inamorata:

> At first Vakula found it frightening when he rose to such a height that he could see nothing below and flew like a fly right under the moon, so that if he hadn't ducked slightly he would have brushed it with his hat. However, in a short while he took heart and began making fun of the devil. He was extremely amused by the way the devil sneezed and coughed whenever he took his cypress-wood cross from his neck and put it near him. He would purposely raise his hand to scratch his head, and the devil, thinking he was about to cross him, would speed up his flight. Everything was bright aloft.... Everything was visible; and he could even observe how a sorcerer, sitting in a pot, raced past them like the wind; how the stars gathered together to play blindman's bluff; how a whole swarm of phantoms billowed in a cloud off to one side; how a devil dancing around the moon took his hat off on seeing the mounted blacksmith; how a broom came flying back, having just served some witch....

The somberly operatic story "The Terrible Vengeance" is comparably memorable, not only for the frequently anthologized prose poem that begins its tenth chapter ("Wondrous is the Dnieper in calm weather...."), but also for its dream sequences, its sustained atmosphere of anxiety and menace, and its quasi-folkloric dramatization, preposterous but weirdly effective, of retribution closing in on a great sinner (in this case an incestuous sorcerer guilty of infanticide, murder, and treason):

> And now he felt no fear, he felt nothing. Everything seemed somehow vague to him. There was a ringing in his ears and in his head, as from drunkenness; and everything before his eyes appeared covered with cobwebs. Leaping on his horse, he headed straight for Kanev, thinking to go from there through Cherkassy to the Tartars, right to the Crimea, himself not knowing why. He rode for one day, for another, but there was no Kanev. It was the right road; it should have been here long ago, but Kanev was nowhere to be seen. Church tops gleamed in the distance. But that was not Kanev, it was Shumsk. The sorcerer was astonished to see that he had gone in a completely different direction. He urged his horse back to Kiev, and a day later a city appeared—not Kiev but Galich, a city still further from Kiev than Shumsk.... Not knowing what to do, he turned his horse back again, but again felt he was going ever further in the contrary direction. No man in the world could tell what was in the sorcerer's soul; and if anyone had looked into it and seen what went on there, he would not have slept the whole night long and would never have laughed again. It was not anger, or fear, or wicked vexation. There is no word in the world that could name it.

The imagination of these early stories may be dated as literature, but it is in fashion again today in popular culture: the crude but colorful scenes, the familiarly stagy characters, the stylized action, the flights of ingenuity unconstrained by physical possibility. Gogol's best interpreter, the Symbolist writer Andrei Bely, observed that "literarily he is not convincing" in these Ukrainian tales, but that "his images are all the more convincing for that."

It is only when he turns away from stock plots and characters to confront drabness, routine, and stasis that Gogol's genius becomes manifest. In that confrontation he found his principal challenge as an artist. The more ordinary the object, he now declared, the more one must be a poet to draw the unusual out of it. This might sound like the artistic challenge of realism—Gogol was mistaken for a realist throughout the nineteenth century—but it had a far more essential and idiosyncratic meaning for him.

In *Dead Souls*, Gogol describes the thankless position of the writer "who has dared to call forth ... all the terrible, shocking slime of trivia that have encumbered our life, all the depth of cold,

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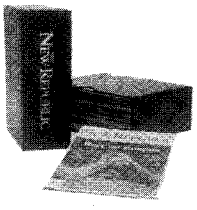

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fragmented, everyday characters with which our earthly, at times bitter and dull road teems." By "calling forth" all these things in his stories and in his unfinished novel, Gogol effectively brought them into serious Russian literature for the first time. But he did it oddly, to exhibit and to condemn them, but not to individuate or to understand them.

His fictional world has little room for human relationships, or for much in the way of meaningful experience. There are *realia* in Gogol's writings, but they do not do the work of *realia* in most other nineteenth-century fiction. There is very little to be learned from Gogol about Russian society in his time, whether about life in bureaucratic Petersburg or life in the Russian heartland (where *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls* are set). The material that he exhibits is there, rather, to be redeemed.

Gogol expressed a horror of "mere existence." He always regarded it as needing to have value and significance conferred on it. In the period of unself-conscious writing that ended with *Dead Souls*, its redemption was primarily aesthetic; later it was to be primarily moral. Still, early and late, his concern was with the transformative power of art, which alone could confer significance—on his own existence, and on the objects of his depiction.

What went unacknowledged in all his pronouncements on these matters was the strength of what the poet Annensky perceived as Gogol's own ecstatic love for existence: "not for life but precisely for existence." So many of his characters are not only mired in the trivial, they are happily mired in it. They know the comfort of mindless routine, and are privy (as their author himself must have been) to the contentment that lies in the blank contemplation of things.

Gogol can be seen discovering this material (and his own genius) in the early story "Ivan Fyodorovich Shponka and His Aunt," where the title character is introduced as "the sort of man who would not allow himself to be bored." When his driver insists on interrupting a journey for the Sabbath, Shponka

> would open his suitcase, take out his linen, examine it well to see if it was properly laundered, properly folded, would carefully remove a piece of fluff from the new uniform, already made without epaulettes, and would put it all back in the best way. Generally speaking, he did not like reading books; and if he ever peeked into the fortune-telling book, it was because he liked meeting familiar things there, already read several times. So a townsman goes to his club every day, not in order to hear anything new there, but to meet those friends with whom from time immemorial he has been used to chatting in the club. So an official takes great pleasure in reading the directory several times a day, not for the sake of any diplomatic undertakings, but because he delights exceedingly in seeing names in print. "Ah! Ivan Gavrilovich So-and-so!" he repeats to himself in a muted voice. "Ah! and here I am! Hm!...." And the next day he rereads it, again with the same exclamations.

Compare Shponka savoring the joys of agricultural work:

> He was constantly present in the fields beside the reapers and mowers, and this brought inexplicable delight to his meek soul. The swinging in unison of a dozen or more shining scythes; the swish of grass falling in orderly rows; the occasional pealing song of the women reapers, now merry as the welcoming of guests, now melancholy as parting; the calm, clear evenings—and what evenings! how free and fresh the air! how everything comes alive then: the steppe turns red and blue and glows with flowers; quails, bustards, gulls, grasshoppers, thousands of insects, and from them comes whistling, buzzing, chirring, crying, and suddenly a harmonious chorus; and it's all never silent for a moment! And the sun is going down and disappearing. Oh! how fresh and good! In the fields, now here, now there, cookfires are started, with cauldrons over them, and around the cauldrons mustached mowers sit; steam rises from the dumplings. The dusk turns gray.... It's hard to say what went on inside Ivan Fyodorovich then. When he joined the mowers, he would forget to sample their dumplings, which he liked very much, and stand motionless in one spot, his eyes following a gull vanishing in the sky, or counting the shocks of harvested grain that studded the field.

The attraction of stasis, routine, and good-natured cretinism, presented in mythified form, is at the center of the first of Gogol's masterpieces, "Old World Landowners." The attraction is relativized, to be sure: the story is as much an expression of ambivalence as its late, great counterpart "The Overcoat." Both stories limn a kind of idiot's Eden, touching in its purity; and both stories go on to show its destruction by the invading world of contingency and crude, deplorable normalcy. Both stories by turns mock and solicit sympathy for their subhuman protagonists—for their very subhumanity, in fact.

What is at work in most of Gogol's all-but-plotless stories can be seen in the shortest of them all, "The Carriage." In this story, virtually nothing happens. At a drunken dinner a provincial landowner hyperbolizes on the theme of an incomparable carriage that he has bought—"You could put a whole bull in the side pockets!"—and invites an incredulous visiting general to dine with him and inspect it on the following day. The landowner oversleeps and, reminded of his promise only by the arrival of his guests, pretends not to be at home; but deciding to have a look anyway, they discover the carriage to be a quite ordinary one—and, curled up in it, their host. "Ah, you're here!" says the amazed general. And that, in the terms of Gogol's artistic strategy, is the point. It is in effect what he is saying about so many of his characters.

All the same, as stern a judge as Tolstoy called "The Carriage" "the peak of perfection in its kind." The perfection in question is clearly not to be sought in character or "content," or in anything that can be indicated by paraphrase, but rather in the narration itself, in the subtle modulations of its rhythms, the arresting oddities of expression, the tantalizingly suggestive details, the abortive but not quite self-canceling gestures toward larger significances, all provoking something like aesthetic bliss in the baffled reader.

In Gogol's best stories—"Old World Landowners," "The Story of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich," "The Carriage," "The Nose," "The Diary of a Madman," "The Overcoat"—events and characters are simulacra. The former are in fact non-events, yet they are powerfully disturbing; the latter, incomplete and stunted, are still endowed with a strange vitality and an inexplicable ability to fascinate. The critic Rozanov puzzled over this helplessly. Nabokov did the same, observing how "the essence of mankind is irrationally derived from the chaos of fakes which form Gogol's world."

All this is to say that the magic of Gogol resides in the ebb and flow of the peculiar narrative discourse that he invented, which manages in writing about nothing to communicate symbolic intuitions about everything. In "The Overcoat," his masterpiece, an exceptional number of serious themes appear—Christian charity and arbitrary authority, urban isolation, purity and corruption, meekness and pride, asceticism and comfort, crime and punishment, this world and the next—but all fleetingly, none of them resolved in the forward rush of the telling and none made primary, so that the story at the same time is and is not "about" them. This poetic discourse, generated by the verbal equivalent of a one-man band, shows a liveliness, sophistication, complexity, and gravity inversely proportional to its objects. Digressive, full of non sequiturs and abrupt shifts of tone and level, it is Gogol's supreme achievement, allying him in part with Dickens, and even more, for all their obvious differences, with Beckett. And it is, inevitably, the challenge and despair of any translator.

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The preface to Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky's new collection takes a view of Gogol substantially in line with what I have been claiming, but unfortunately it has nothing specific to say about his style, or about the challenges that the translators found in it, or about the effects that they sought to reproduce in English and the ones that they had to forgo. Pevear and Volokhonsky began their collaboration by producing new versions of Dostoyevsky's novels, taking particular pains to reproduce in English such repetitions and awkwardnesses as they found in the Russian originals. The results, though sometimes controversial, were often salutary, undoing the elisions in older translations that had the effect of making Dostoyevsky sound smoother and more conventional than he should have. But Gogol's prose is an altogether different matter.

Since Gogol's prose operates as a kind of prose poetry, literalism cannot be a sufficient goal: imaginative liberties and painful tradeoffs are forced on the translator. In Gogol's Russian, the styles of these stories vary a good deal, and the translators do better with some registers than with others. They are at their best with the comparatively neutral prose of "Nevsky Prospect," and their version is far and away the best in English. At the other extreme, colloquial dialogue (and its counterpart in quirky first-person narration) tends to fare worst. Since the narrative and linguistic range may be considerable even within a single story, a reader is likely to feel the prose going in and out of focus as felicities alternate with clunkers.

There is, alas, a fair share of translatorese in these pages:

> ... and at the same time vexation came over his soul that it was not in his power to cover this so nicely laughing face with kisses.

> "He may give me a thrashing for all I know, the cursed bastard!"

> "... every word he said made all my fibers groan."

> Now a boat blackened on the wide Dnieper, and again something as if flashed in the castle.

> "Stetsko! don't gape, watch with all your eyes for which path master father will take."

And there are startling Americanisms:

> "What's with you!" said Choub, in a voice that expressed pain, vexation, and timorousness.

> Noisier and noisier sounded the songs and shouts in the streets.... The lads frolicked and horsed around freely.

And there are simple solecisms:

> "I can seat a horse."

> He went in quietly, without creaking the door.

> "It's your overcoat I need! You didn't solicit about mine, and roasted me besides—now give me yours!"

The publisher calls this the first new translation of Gogol's stories in twenty-five years. It is not. Oxford University Press published all three cycles of Gogol's stories in a new translation by Christopher English just three years ago. Other, older versions by Andrew MacAndrew, Ronald Wilks, David Magarshack, and Constance Garnett (as updated by Leonard Kent) are still available, as is Bernard Guerney's resourceful rendition of "The Overcoat" (in Viking's *Portable Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader*). Pevear and Volokhonsky may justly be seen as superseding MacAndrew and Wilks, but there are reasons to be glad that the others are still around. Readers in search of Gogol could do worse than to read them all.

DONALD FANGER is Harry Levin Research Professor of Literature at Harvard and the author of *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol* (Harvard University Press).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 5*

exclusion of noncustodial dads, and its failure to hold agencies that run the programs financially accountable.

DAVID R. RIEMER
Director of Administration
City of Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Bald and ribald

To the editors:

Peter Green's very knowledgeable and provocatively witty discussion of Lawrence Durrell's life and work was slightly marred for me by his rampant distaste for Henry Miller's work and his disdain for Miller himself ("A Small Blond Firework," September 14 & 21). Durrell was 23, Miller 43 when they began their correspondence, so Miller was not exactly the "old reprobate" Green calls him, and terms like "bald" and "bespectacled," even in conjunction with "goat-faced," don't quite capture the visage of the man as he appeared in Brassaï's portraits in the mid-1930s. Calling Miller's work "squalid and joyless pornography" places Green among many others who were so disgusted with the sexual descriptions that they saw nothing else in the *Tropics*, while other readers—like T.S. Eliot—found some evidence of real literary accomplishment in *Tropic of Cancer*. And, for a contrary view of Miller, how about Dylan Thomas in 1938 writing to his friend Vernon Watkins? Miller, he said, is "a dear mad mild man, bald and fifty with great enthusiasm for commonplaces." Only the tonsure remains the same.

LEON LEWIS
Boone, North Carolina

Peter Green replies:

In context, I was summarizing Miller over the long haul in his lengthy relationship with Durrell. Even so, at 43 he was no spring chicken. Leon Lewis and I must have been looking at different photographs: I stand by the goat face and the spectacles. As for the sex, in 1940 Miller assured Eudora Welty (of all people!) that he could put her in touch, as a writer, with "an unfailing pornographic market." She obviously agreed with Dylan Thomas (as would I) over Miller's "great enthusiasm for commonplaces": he bored her to death. Seeing nothing but sex in *Tropic of Cancer* is rather like seeing nothing but God in the Bible: Eliot (not exactly an erotic expert) did not, I note, offer to publish it. Lastly, my friends will relish the implication that I'm a sexual puritan even more than I do.

True believer

To the editors:

A Notebook item in your September 14 & 21 issue about Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell's 1971 pro-business "Powell Memorandum" suggests that it embodies a "backlash against modern liberalism." But that memorandum, written and presented to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors shortly before Powell's appointment to the Supreme Court, is simply an affirmation of free enterprise during a period in our history when it was fashionable to attack it.

It's easy to forget that, in 1971, the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain were intact, reforms of the Chinese economy were years away, and communism was gearing up for its final advance in Southeast Asia. And here, in the United States, there were a number of prominent people in the media, in government, and in academia who strongly believed that the free enterprise system would end up on the ash heap of history and that the command-and-control central-planning system was inevitable—even desirable. Under those circumstances, Justice Powell's message was sorely needed.

STEPHEN A. BOKAT
Senior Vice President and General Counsel
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
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WARSAW DIARIST

Identity politics

ALL MY LIFE I HAVE BEEN AWARE OF the awkward fact that I am of mixed blood. Back in Poland, my country of origin (I purposely avoid the use of the word "home" because, in my case, it does not carry much meaning), for a short stay recently, I was reminded of the feeling of uneasiness that I had in my Warsaw childhood and then again as Polish postwar democracy was being born. Polish-Jewish relations have always been a painful subject, and to be of mixed blood strikes me as a very unfortunate middle way. Around the time of different holy days, this sentiment of awkwardness becomes more acute, and then it subsides almost completely.

I FIRST BECAME CONSCIOUS OF my "other" heritage at age five or six, just before I began primary school. A little boy my age called me "shitty Jew." Of course I knew the word "shitty," but "Jew" was new to me; I suspected it must be a bad word, too. I went back to my parents, but the explanation was evasive so I do not remember it. In any case, there was nothing about coming from among the chosen ones or any mention of the synagogue. (There was none functioning, and my Jewish ancestors had been assimilated for at least two generations.) My father (it is from him that I inherited the Jewish part of my identity) just told me that "we are a little different." I do not recall then or ever afterward being totally at ease with this notion of being "a little different." At primary school the revelation that I had not been baptized confirmed to my little companions that I was definitely different, and I experienced my share of anti-Semitism, along the lines of this first experience. This of course made me feel more Jewish than the arithmetic of my pedigree would suggest.

WHEN I RETURNED TO POLAND IN 1989, after 15 years of émigré status in Paris and New York, I worked for the new daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. That July, I found myself reporting about the controversy over the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz. Constantly torn between the two identities, I used my mixed heritage to create a bridge between the two sides in that dispute. I was explaining to the American rabbi who came to protest the nuns' presence that, apart from the undeniable anti-Semitism, the hostility of the Poles was due to ignorance ("praying nuns and a cross surely cannot hurt, can they?") and primitive politics ("the Church resisted the Reds so those who disagree with it must be commies"). To the Polish Catholics I was explaining that the American Jewish protesters had a valid point, that a praying nun or even a cross can be offensive to Jews on the ground of the largest Holocaust site. I'd better confess that I did not achieve much. It took four years and an intervention by the Pope for the Carmelite nuns to move out.

EVER SINCE THIS FIRST major confrontation of newly democratic Poland and her anti-Semitic ghosts, a simultaneous outing of Jews and of anti-Semites is happening. The sudden rediscovery of Jewish identity was the result not of a new political climate; it had to do with biology. Half a century after the end of World War II, those who were then young are disappearing. Thus, in confessions at their parents' deathbeds or in documents discovered after the funerals, thousands of Polish citizens are having it revealed to them that they indeed are Jews, adopted by gentiles after the Jewish parents did not come back to claim the babies they left, fearing deportation by Nazis. The adoptive parents, to integrate the little orphans and protect them from anti-Semitism, usually did not reveal to them their real origin. In 1996, a group of young Polish Jews created a "Jewish confidence line" to help deal with "new Jewishness," to advise what it means to be Jewish and how to live Jewishly (or not). Dialing 652–2144 on Thursday evenings in Warsaw, "new Jews" get a trained volunteer who listens and counsels. The fact that Warsaw now has a Jewish kindergarten, primary, and secondary school is encouraging. There is even a Jewish monthly, *Midrash*. The few thousands who want to bring up their children according to Jewish tradition can do so. But many may choose to remain in anonymity.

PARALLEL WITH THE REDISCOVERING of Jewish roots, there is a dangerous revival of Polish anti-Semitism. It may be superficial, but it is definitely widespread and nasty. The worst offender, a recidivist, is the former confessor of Lech Walesa, Father Henryk Jankowski, from Gdansk. In a 1995 homily, he advised that "those who did not say whether they come from Moscow or from Israel should not be allowed to govern." He continued in a similar vein until 1997, when he was banned from saying homilies for a year by the Polish Episcopate for remarking publicly that "people representing a Jewish minority should not be accepted in our government." Father Jankowski has strong competition on the anti-Semitic racecourse from Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, the director of the fundamentalist, xenophobic, and populist Radio Maryja. This broadcast is an embarrassment for the entire Polish Catholic Church, but the program has a large following, and some 35 deputies from the governing "Solidarity Electoral Action" are known to be its enthusiasts. Since its launch in 1991, Radio Maryja has been the voice of the darkest forces: it aims at liberal politicians, declaring them Jews, Masons, and Stalinists. Some say that Polish anti-Semitism is not so much the hatred of Jews as the Judaization of the object of hatred. In other words, the mentality is not "X is a Jew; therefore, I don't like him"; it is rather "I don't like X; therefore, he is a Jew."

BACK IN POLAND THIS SUMMER, I was not surprised to find out that a forest of 200 crosses had grown in Auschwitz on the gravel pit just outside the death camp, surrounding the 23-foot-high crucifix that sparked the entire dispute. Radio Maryja was of course involved, and crosses were planted by "real Poles," by skinheads, and even by Polish émigrés from New York and Chicago. Kostek Gebert, the editor of *Midrash*, says that it is a dispute between the extreme Catholic right and the liberal Church hierarchy. He almost convinced me, and we agreed that the situation could be solved if the Pope asked for the big cross to be brought to the Vatican or to Castel Gandolfo, his summer residence. Just as I was going to attribute the cross controversy to a Polish variation of Lefevrism, Father Jankowski reared his head again. On Rosh Hashanah this year, he publicly advised his fellow Poles: "One should attend election meetings and ask where a candidate is from and what is his origin so afterward one won't have to regret that a Jew or a Russian got voted into office."

AROUND THE TIME OF THE HIGH Holy Days I always feel awkward about not belonging anywhere. But awkwardness is easier to carry than shame.

ANNA HUSARSKA

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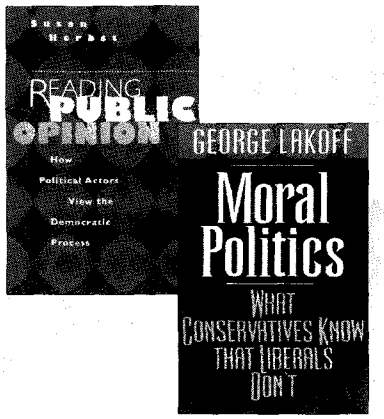
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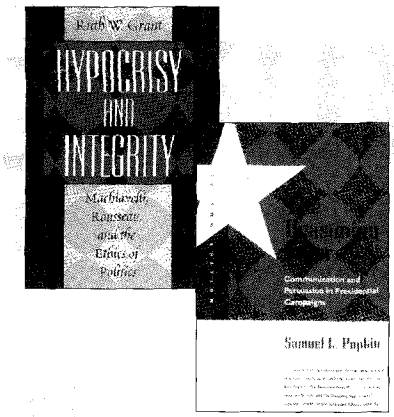

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